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#255
MAY/JUN 2011

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Newsstand cover by
JASON EOMISTON!



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BOB EGGLETON!

OPENING WOUNDS

It's hard to believe that since joining this band of maniacs in April of 2010, I have assisted in putting out seven (count 'em!) issues of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*! (And they told me this was to be a quarterly.) The eighth magazine — *Famous Monsters Underground* #1 (helmed by the talented April Snellings) — will be out in May.

What you're holding in your hands contains our salute to Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Of course, one cannot cover the lore and cultural impact of Lovecraft in one 80-page magazine; but we will have made one heck of a dent. From Lovecraft's personal struggles amid his unappreciative contemporary audience to the molecular level influences of his Mythos on today's writers and filmmakers, FM examines a legend whose great works took three generations to appreciate. HPL — ever in the hearts of horror fans worldwide — continues to show up on screen and in print. From indie filmmakers to no less than Guillermo del Toro, whose plans include a big screen version of *At the Mountains of Madness*, one can find The Prophet's work everywhere. In the various collected works, to reprints of the books, to film and television, he has appeared every decade since his first published work of fiction—"The Alchemist" in the *United Amateur* — in November 1918. As we begin another decade here in 2011, we're delighted to note that it will soon be 100 years since the world first read H.P. Lovecraft's fiction!

In 2001, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* premiered. An instant hit with all age groups, the movie spawned six sequels to date based on the stories by J. K. Rowling. The eighth and final film in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, will open in July of this year, completing the cycle and ending ten years of regular updates about the students of Hogwarts. I, for one, am going to miss them; and, it seems only correct that *Famous Monsters of Filmland* gives them a proper send-off.

Crammed into the following pages you will find these goodies and all things weird and wonderful from the usual departments. It should keep you all busy until May when *Underground* premieres. We'll see you then!

Jessie Lilley

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND

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Greetings Monster Kids, welcome to another edition of Fang Mail. We are always axe-cepting your letters, photos, and art!

DEAR MONSTERS SO FAMOUS, URGENT BUSINESS PROPOSAL.

This letter may come to you as a surprise since it is coming from someone you have not met before. However, we decided to contact you based on a satisfactory information we had about the western world, as regards business information concerning your country and the safety of our funds in a steady economy such as that of your country compared to our country Nigeria, Africa. I am a young prince in exile. My close and trusted colleagues and I need your assistance in the transfer of US\$45.5 million into any reliable Account you may nominate overseas. This fund was generated from over-invoicing of contracts executed by the N.N.P.C. under our control and supervision. This fund is now ready to be remitted into any account we put forward for that purpose. What we want from you is a good and reliable company or personal account into which we shall transfer this fund. Details should include the following:

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Best regards,
BENSON KABO
Nigerian Prince

Our fan(g)s are so generous and benevolent.

Dearest FM-

It was summertime in the early sixties when a boy was checking out a magazine stand when the discovery was made, I believe it was issue #18 with Elsa Lancaster as The Bride of Frankenstein. The logo that magnificent logo! I knew then I was not alone in my passion for monsters! Flash forward to the present-October 2010 and that same boy is checking out the mag rack and he sees it. That beautiful logo! It's back! Thank you so much for bringing back the most important publication and you are doing the most fantastic job!! I believe if Fory was still around and doing this, FM would be very much like it is now. Bravo!!

Sincerely,
Paul Hicks

Dear Famous Monsters,

Much of Famous Monsters #254 is devoted to Vincent Price, the legendary thespian born 100 years ago. The issue includes a fine tribute by Greg Mank, and an incisive essay on Price and film noir by Alan K. Rode. Other informative features include Ron Gammon's conversation with Victoria Price, and a fun interview with rocker Alice Cooper conducted by editor Jessie Lilley.

One of my favorite early Vincent Price films is The House of the Seven Gables (1940), adapted from the Nathaniel Hawthorne novel. Although not a horror film by definition, it is a darkly atmospheric tale of betrayal and vengeance. The young Price is excellent as Clifford Pyncheon, while George Sanders is equally impressive as his vindictive brother. Like Boris Karloff, Price was nearly as famous for his distinctive voice as he was for his iconic face, and he

often appeared in radio dramas during the radio's heyday. One of my favorites is the 1946 episode of Suspense entitled The Name of the Beast, featuring Price as a portrait artist (apt casting indeed, since Mr Price was a noted art aficionado in real life).

Speaking of art, Jason Edmiston's portrait of Vincent Price easily wins my vote as best cover for FM #254. While the other artists are talented enough, the Price cover feels more like Famous Monsters of Finland to me.

Timothy M. Walters

My first issue of FM was Dec. '65, #36 with the Lon Chaney Jr. Mummy face cover. My Mom and I were at the store when I saw it. I asked her if I could have it. She said "NO!" Later, that evening, after my Dad got home from work I said to his... "Hey, Dad! I saw a book at the store I want." He said, "Well, let's go get it!" He told my Mom, "We're going to the store, be right back." After he bought me that book, on the way home I was having a good laugh and said finally, "HA! Mom wouldn't let me have this!" He was like, "WHAT?!" Needless to say, that book survived into the early '80's before it finally disappeared.

Billy Davis
Long Branch, N.J.

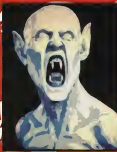
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In My Write Mind...

Richard J. Schellbach

I AM GEEK HEAR ME ROAR!

Like almost every child of the '50s and '60s I tossed a Frisbee around, skateboarded, and played endless games of hide-and-seek. But even at a tender young age, I had the sense that something was missing. I was an awkward kid. I wasn't good at sports. Oh, sure, get me liquored up and I'll tell you ad nauseam about my many triumphs on the baseball field when I played for my Little League team, Douglas Dye. But when I tell those same stories within earshot of my dad, he just shakes his head and chortles quietly to himself... that is, when he's not reminding me that once, immediately after hitting a solid triple that came within four inches of going over the left field fence — possibly the greatest at-bat of my sporting life — I tripped over first base, disappeared in a cloud of dust, and turned a guaranteed three-bagger into just barely a single (startling because, at almost 90, Dad is the first to admit he doesn't have the memory he once had. But the "first base flop" — as my entire family have come to call it — that he remembers!).

Shortly after promising the Sports Gods that, for time infinitum, my only participation in either baseball or football would be yelling at the TV from my living room couch, they smiled down upon me and I was introduced to the first love of my life: horror and science fiction. It was literally an overnight event. I remember waking up on a beautiful Saturday morning in 1964 and suddenly horror and science fiction were everywhere. At age 8, I was solidly on board the Geektown Express, and I just knew it was going to be the ride of a lifetime.

Now before I get to the meat of this column, permit me to clear up something. For far too many years, there

has been much confusion over the words "Geek" and "Nerd." Most folks think that they are interchangeable. Well, I'm here to tell you that they are not. Nerds are the guys immortalized in movies, TV shows, books, and comics, who wear black, thick-framed eyeglasses, broken at the nose bridge and taped together, high-water pants, ultra-white socks and shirt pocket protectors for pens, pencils — and in some extreme cases — micrometers. Geeks, on the other hand, are a completely different animal altogether. Almost always male, Geeks possess high intelligence and the ability to fanatically latch onto a specific visual art form (most often science fiction movies, video games with a mythical bent, and television shows involving hot women in form-fitting space suits and/or uniforms). Geeks are not to be feared. We are not freaks — just nice people with way too much trivia-based knowledge pertaining to spaceships, giant monsters, Japanese animation, dragons... you get the idea. Where Geeks have, throughout history, gone astray is in their belief that this knowledge of all things trivial will impress women. The problem stems from the fact that we are impressed with the amount of trivia we've managed to cram into our craniums. As are other Geeks. So, we figure that if we're impressed and other Geeks are impressed, women will be so taken with the amount of Geek knowledge we've managed to amass that they'll latch onto us like those flying doohickeys from *Not of this Earth* and never let us go. Sadly, that never happens. No, if you were a self-aware Geek growing up around the time I did, you reached a point sometime during junior high and high school when you

realized that you'd probably never know the touch of a woman.

I've been a Geek for all of my life and, even after 22 years of marriage, each and every time I try to explain to Eileen that a tachyon detection grid — although used by the Federation to detect a cloaked vessel — is not technically a weapon, she looks at me with that same glazed-over look one would expect from someone with a severe case of snow blindness... or complete insanity. Now before you think ill of me, let me state for the record that this not-quite-in-cement rule doesn't apply to all women. Some members of the opposite sex actually see the plusses in sharing their hearts and lives with a Geek. But they are few and far between — only three or four of them for each 10,000 women who walk the planet... roughly the same percentage of women as those who love the Three Stooges and a good meal at Taco Bell. But I can state without fear of contradiction that most women shun Geeks like 17th century lepers; and the closest most teenage Geeks come to even the most rudimentary form of emotional coupling is the occasional Vulcan salute... and technically, there's no touching there. I'll even go as far as stating that the only reason I ever got a woman to marry me in the first place was that I was able to successfully cloak my Geekosity during the courting stage. But I hold that Eileen was on to me by week three of our marriage, although she swears it was week one.

So, now that we have, once and for all, settled the Geek vs. Nerd argument, let's move on to what must be your next logical question: How does one know they're a Geek?

Well, if you're reading this column, there's a good chance you've already reached the promised land... or at least you're well on your way. Since "going Geek," I've come to realize that things I do in everyday life send out the "He's a Geek!" warning flares on a continual basis. But if you are still on the fence, wondering if you've entered into Geekdom, search back in your memories and, before too long, you'll most likely have your answer.

Here's something that really — no kidding around — happened to me: Like most Geeks, I rent a large storage unit to warehouse all of the "stuff" I own but don't have room for in my condo. Oh, and a few holiday decorations. I've been doing this since the tail end of the Reagan administration and have spent tens of thousands of dollars to store stuff that I love dearly but

haven't actually seen in decades. If that fact alone isn't enough to convict me of Geekosity to the nth degree, this should pretty much lock it down: In early December I was at the storage unit pulling Christmas decorations. Now I have always thought it would be cool to do a zombie movie inside of a storage complex. You know — a band of civilians hole up and have to break into each unit in hopes of finding food and weapons as a horde of zombies run rampant on the property. (I'm thinking *Storage Unit of the Living Dead*, but that's not important right now.) Anyway, entering the building, I thought I heard a voice. So, as I passed each hallway I'd take a good long look to make sure that no one else was there. This way I wouldn't look like a complete fool when I bumped into someone rounding a corner and screamed like an 8-year-old schoolgirl. As I closed in on my specific storage unit, I could have sworn I heard a voice again. Hell, it was a voice and it was close this time. In fact, I could almost make out a word. A few minutes later, I was pulling more holiday decorations out of the unit and I swear the voice seemed to be coming from right over my shoulder. With visions of storage unit zombies dancing in my head, I put down the armload of decorations, slammed the door of my unit and locked it.

And that's when I heard the voice again.

It was a few feet away and coming from inside of the storage unit I just locked.

And the words were crystal clear now.

Unmistakable.

The voice said, "Danger, Will Robinson! Danger!"

And that's when I realized that the toy *Lost In Space* robot I had purchased a year or so ago and put into storage must have been left on and occasional noises were triggering its sensor and making it talk.

Laughing to myself like an idiot, I drove straight to the management office to tell them this story, in hopes of giving them something to chuckle about. But the second I told them that I had heard a voice, both guys in the office (together, in two-part harmony) said, "Danger, Will Robinson! Danger!" Shocked, I asked them how long it had been going on. With that "You're a big Geek!" look I've become so familiar with throughout my over five decades on the planet, the manager said, "About eight months now. We figured whatever was making all that noise must belong to you."

I am Geek. Hear me roar! 

The Re-Making of Thriller:

Makeup FX wizard Howard Berger talks about recreating the iconic Michael Jackson video

By Joe Nazzaro



Michael Jackson, undoubtedly, was one of the biggest Monster Kids of all time. His affinity for all things horror and his long friendship with Forrest J Ackerman are well-documented. It is no surprise that his love of Monster-dom lead him to make one of the most iconic pieces of monster cinema in the modern era. In 1983, megastar Michael Jackson teamed up with director John Landis and Oscar-winning makeup artist Rick Baker to create *Thriller*, a 14-minute horror-musical that featured Jackson leading a host of zombie performers in a macabre dance sequence. The video not only became an instant hit for MTV, but a subsequent 'making-of' documentary also became a surprise hit in the home video market.

What many Jackson fans don't realize is there was *another* version of *Thriller* that almost never saw the light of day. In 2009, the ambiguously-named 'Dome Project' began shooting a collection of short films and visual effects segments for a series of concert dates that Jackson had had booked at London's O2 Arena. That included a remake of *Thriller* which would sit on the arena's giant screens, segueing into a musical number featuring a group of zombie performers.

The new *Thriller* shoot was scheduled for June of 2009, with the team from KNB EFX Group taking on the various zombie makeup. As KNB chief Howard Berger recalls, "We had just finished *Drag Me to Hell* and Bruce Jones, who was the visual effects supervisor on the film, was also good friends with my partner Greg Nicotero.

"The next show Bruce went on to was this big concert for Michael Jackson. He was working for a project called 'Dome' and called Greg to say, 'We're going to do redo *Thriller* for this show, it's going to be a 3D movie and all of a sudden the dancers are going to come out of the screen dressed as zombies and put on a whole show with Michael Jackson!' We were told that Kenny Ortega was going to be directing it and they wanted to hire us to handle some of the zombies. Greg thought it was going to be awesome and said yes."

Like most of the makeup artists of his generation, Berger still regards the original *Thriller* as hugely influential. "I remember waiting to see it when it first premiered on MTV. I ran home from school to see it. I think MTV ran it every 15 minutes or so and I sat there and watched it over and over again. It was the coolest thing in the universe. Every time I watched it my heart pounded out of my chest because it was an amazing video."

John Landis directed it and Rick Baker, my biggest idol, did the makeup—so it just couldn't be any better."

Having worked on all manner of zombie-related projects over the past three decades, the KNB team was a perfect choice to help create a new generation of Jackson-inspired creatures. "They were mainly going to need a lot of generic zombie makeup," claims Berger, "and of course we already had a plethora of them in the shop. We didn't have to sculpt anything new and it was all going to be very fast and furious. There were actually going to be three different kinds of zombies on the shoot: there were the more *Thriller*-esque zombies, which is what we were



A Thrilling re-hearse-all!



doing. They were going to be these really nice, clean designs that were very faithful to the original Rick Baker makeup. There were these zombie masks that they had another company, Makeup Effects Lab; going, so Allan Apone was in charge of doing them. They were kind of broad-looking and they had to be made so that they could be worn on stage as well. And finally, they hired these high-fashion makeup people to do a couple of ghoulish-looking makeup that were more paint related for the women.

"We went ahead and prepped it really fast because we were only going to have two days on set, and I hired a bunch of really good makeup artists, including Douglas Noe, Dave Dupuis, and Greg Nelson. The one thing I wanted was to do it all old school, so we didn't bring in any airbrushes. I said, 'Guys, we're going to hand-paint everything. We're going to use PAX paint and foam rubber appliances and we'll hand-paint everything and make it feel really organic and spontaneous!' The guys really liked that, especially Greg Nelson, who had worked on the original *Thriller*."

While Berger's people were working on the featured zombies, a group from Makeup & Effects Lab was dealing with the background characters while another team had to look after the female dancers. "They were high-fashion makeup artists," Berger

notes of the latter, "so I really didn't know who they were, but they were in a whole other world than we were. We were the effects guys banging out our zombies while they did beautiful makeup; they took quadruple the time frame that we were doing ours in. But I loved those two bride characters; I thought the makeup were outstanding and when I saw them on set I was like, 'Those are fantastic; I wish I had done them!'"

With just two days for the entire shoot, there were terribly long hours involved. But it all became worth it on day two when Jackson himself showed up. "When they announced that Michael was going to come on set," Berger recalls, "there was going to be no photography or anything like that, but he was so nice and gracious to all of us. He came around and thanked everybody for being there and doing a great job and he sat there for a couple of hours and watched it. Here was the greatest pop star in the world. He brought a certain energy and electricity to the stage and it was all very exciting."

For Berger, who had rushed home from school nearly three decades earlier to see the original *Thriller*, working on a new version was an unforgettable, if bittersweet, experience. "The feeling on the set was very magical," he notes. "At one point I walked up to Greg Nelson and said, 'Is this how the original



Monstrous creations come to life!



felt?" and he said, "This is better!" The *Thriller* music was playing and we were all on the graveyard set and there were zombies dancing and I thought, "This is so awesome!" It really was a thrill. And even though we were all so tired and burned-out by the end, I was really proud of our work—and loved every second of it.

"And two weeks later, Michael Jackson passed away and we all thought that was the end of it. We heard they were going to lock up the footage and it would never be seen again, so we were all very broken-hearted, for a number of reasons, mostly because

Michael Jackson was gone. And then it was announced that they were going to put it out as the feature *[This Is It]*. It was awesome.

We didn't get a credit, which was a bit disappointing because we had all worked so hard, but that's okay. I was really happy with our work and our guys all got featured prominently, so it was really exciting and so neat to be a part of that last bit of Michael Jackson history."

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The Just Us League: Cracking skulls and ruling the world in Sony's DC Universe

by Ed Blair

For those of us who've ever dreamed of being a super hero or mega villain, but whose flabby exteriors and aversion to pain and physical exertion have held us back, *DC Universe Online* is our dream fulfilled. While a slight few of you may want to pick up a copy of E. Paul Zehr's *Becoming Batman*, spend years getting beaten bloody in Krav Maga, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and Gymnastics classes honing your body into the perfect weapon (sorry Jeff Spicoli!) while also getting the equivalent of a triple Ph.D in forensics, electrical engineering, and biochemistry—the rest of us will find a great satisfaction in picking up a controller (or a keyboard for you gaming “purists”) and strapping on the tighties as our own hero or villain and laying a beating down all over DC's comic world.

The first thing to note is that Sony brought in a world-class team to oversee this project. Jim Lee (*Batman: Hush*) heads the creative team and was in charge of many of the customization options for each character. From tighties to armor to various super powers and fighting styles, very little has been left out when it comes to achieving your ideal character. But having all that style does not one bit of good if there isn't some substance upon which to create a solid foundation. Geoff Johns, the man who brought back Hal Jordan and was instrumental in the massive *Infinite Crisis* and 52 series created the epic, overarching storyline that governs the game,

centering on Supermana shopping Brainiac and his scheme of taking over Earth with an invading army of robot drones. The third piece of the creative puzzle was Marv Wolfman, creator of *Teen Titans* and *Black*. His duties deal with none of the minute-to-minute actions and the smaller stories that help create a much richer and more immersive experience.

While all of these were nice selling points that created a strong sense of anticipation here at the FM offices, the real treat came when we finally got our chance to take it for a spin. First on the creation dock was “Mr. Sci-Fi.” In honor of our founding editor-in-chief we created a character that looks straight out of the science fiction serials of the 30s and 40s. We decided that this one needed to fly because, well, who doesn't want to fly? Next up was Effjay Akkaman, after the nickname that was bestowed upon Uncle Furry by H.P. Lovecraft. Unlike his flying counterpart,



“For those of us who've ever dreamed of being a super hero or mega-villain . . . DC Universe Online is our dream fulfilled.”

Effjay was a brawler with some serious hand-to-hand skills, no flying for this one.

Our little tag team of brains and brawn was complete. As we brought more of our friends and co-workers into the mix we decided to form our own guild—The Scientification Club. Don't let the name fool you. Our little band of villains made quite a formidable team. We sent many a light-wearing do-gooder to the hospital.

What's great about the game is the incredible variety of options. If one of us just wanted to play on our own, or the others were doing something like work, we could play the game through as if it were a single-player campaign. There's no requirement to have others around to share the experience with, something that has hindered many other online RPG's (MMORPG's for those “in the know”). If the group was feeling a little

froggy, we had the option to jump in and get some player vs. player action, pitting our group against other player-created characters in an all-out *Warriors*-esque smackdown (yeah, we dug it). Lastly, we would get together and move through the various story-based missions. While the game doesn't allow the players to take control of established heroes and villains, those marquee players will often show up to participate in the missions. As the game progresses, fighting alongside Batman or Lex Luthor is not an uncommon occurrence. There are also a healthy number of smaller missions not directly pertaining to the main storyline that will allow the characters to level up and attain more abilities and weapons. Upgrading characters is dependent upon completing missions, not gaining XP, meaning that we got to avoid the incessant grinding and power-leveling found in so many other games in the genre.

Many, many hours of what the boss calls “productivity” were lost due to the exploits of The Scientification Club. It's clear that a lot of thought and care went into making this game an authentic comic book experience with seemingly endless layers of details. While it's not perfect and could use some more polish, the promise of updates and increased content makes our little fanboy hearts flutter with excitement. So what are you waiting for? Pull on the spandex, grab your goggles, and come find The Scientification Club... if you dare!



A SUPREME SPOILER SURPRISE HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS

BY NILES KUN

The decision to split *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* into two films was a controversial one—beyond the obvious financial benefits, why leave the audience in such a state of limbo for the eight long months that would separate the two movies? The answer is simple: Like most good film adaptations, the motion picture is not a carbon copy of its text counterpart. But in spite of its occasional deviations—for instance, a few scenes from the book didn't make it onto the screen—*Part 1* was faithful to its source material, and tells us much about what we can expect from *Part 2*.

First, a little backstory. The villain of the series is He Who Must Not Be Named, but we'll go ahead and name him: Tom Riddle, better known as Voldemort. Like most antagonists in a story like this, he is more powerful than anyone else in his world. But—and there is always a "but"—Voldemort has a weakness. In order to become the all-powerful and seemingly immortal being he is, he had to give something up. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* is about our heroes' journey to find and destroy the Horcruxes, which are physical objects in which a dark wizard can store pieces of his soul.

Since *Part 1* ended on a decidedly somber note—the death of Dobby the house elf—it's probably safe to assume *Part 2* will begin with the book's next major beat: a daring attempt to raid Bellatrix Lestrange's vault at the goblin-run Gringotts Wizarding

Bank, where they hope to find one of the Horcruxes. Harry appeals to Griphook for help; the goblin agrees on the condition that, afterward, Harry gives him the sword of Godric Gryffindor.

Harry and his friends also consult Ollivander, the wizarding community's premier wandmaker. He tells them the wands they stole from Lestrange and Draco Malfoy should work for them, and that Harry's wand seems unmendable. Ollivander also warns them that wands normally change allegiance when taken by force, and that Voldemort was searching for the elder wand. (Of course we know Voldemort already has the wand, having stolen it from Dumbledore's grave.)

In preparation for the raid, Hermione takes Polyjuice Potion in order to disguise herself as Bellatrix, and magically alters Ron's appearance; Harry simply uses the invisibility cloak. They make their way into Lestrange's vault, where they hope to find one of two objects—the cup of Hufflepuff or the tiara of Ravenclaw.

The first mistake they make is out of ignorance. They find things that look like the Horcruxes, but the objects prove to be worthless (and cursed) copies. Harry finally finds the cup of Hufflepuff,

only to have Griphook steal Gryffindor's sword from him before he can use it to destroy the Horcrux. Harry and his friends escape from Gringott's with the help of a most unlikely ally.

The trio barely has time to treat their wounds before they realize that one of the last Horcruxes is hidden within the walls of Hogwarts (the other is Voldemort's snake, Nagini). They return to Hogsmeade, where they are immediately attacked by Death Eaters and dementors, only to be saved by Aberforth Dumbledore—Albus Dumbledore's younger brother. Aberforth shows them a secret passageway into the Room of Requirement, where the young heroes learn that their friends have gathered to fight for Harry. Harry tells them he must find Ravenclaw's lost diadem. Luna Lovegood takes him to the Ravenclaw common room to show him a replica of the crown. Here they are confronted by Allecto Carrow, a Death Eater who was teaching at Hogwarts. Allecto summons Voldemort with the Dark Mark on her forearm.

What follows is the showdown we've been waiting for since the final chapters of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. When the smoke clears, at least two major characters will be dead, and the wizarding world will be forever changed. Long-running mysteries will be solved, and we'll spend a few more moments with characters we thought we'd never see again. We've given away a few secrets here—more than we should have, perhaps—but we've left the most tantalizing stones unturned.

Ollivander's Wand List

by Gabriel Kim

To a wizard, the wand is their security. It is what they defend themselves with. When the witch or wizard enters the wand shop, the wand maker begins picking wands for each to try. The right wand chooses its owner. After that, the wand now belongs to our wizard. A wand may change owners in certain circumstances. If the owner of a wand is killed then the wand changes ownership to the killer. Also, if the wand is taken by force from its owner it will almost always change its allegiance.

Harry Potter: Holly, 11", phoenix feather. Harry's wand is made from the same phoenix as Voldemort's wand.

Hermione Granger: Vine wood, 10½", dragon heartstring. Harry used this wand when his was broken.

Ron Weasley: Ash, 12", unicorn tail hair.

Draco Malfoy: Hawthorn, 10", unicorn hair. Draco's wand was stolen by Harry at Malfoy Manor.

Bellatrix: Walnut, 12¾", dragon heartstring. Harry stole this wand from Malfoy while he was holding it at Malfoy Manor, and Hermione used it when they broke into Gringotts.

Luna Lovegood: This wand was crafted for Luna after Death Eaters stole her other wand.

Reubeus Hagrid: Oak, 16". When Hagrid got expelled and the teachers broke his wand, he concealed the remnants in his umbrella.

Neville Longbottom: Cherrywood, 13", unicorn hair. This wand was previously owned by Neville's father.

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore: Elderwood. This wand is the unbeatable wand, found by Albus Dumbledore.

Voldemort: Yewwood, 13½". This wand was made from the same phoenix as Harry's wand.

Lucius Malfoy: Elmwood, Dragon Heartstring core, 18". This wand was a family heirloom of the Malfoy family before it was destroyed when Voldemort battled Harry with it.

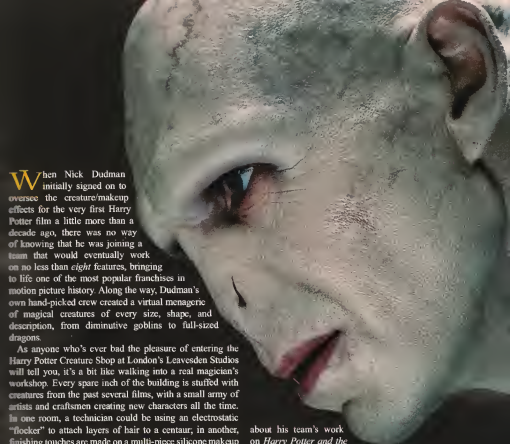
Helena Bonham Carter and others of the Death Eater variety





GRIPHOOK, GOBLINS AND OTHER
MAGICAL ADVENTURES:
MAKEUP EFFECTS WIZARD
NICK DUDMAN TALKS ABOUT
HARRY POTTER AND THE
DEATHLY HALLOWS

BY JOE NAZZARO



When Nick Dudman initially signed on to oversee the creature/makeup effects for the very first Harry Potter film a little more than a decade ago, there was no way of knowing that he was joining a team that would eventually work on no less than *eight* features, bringing to life one of the most popular franchises in motion picture history. Along the way, Dudman's own hand-picked crew created a virtual menagerie of magical creatures of every size, shape, and description, from diminutive goblins to full-sized dragons.

As anyone who's ever had the pleasure of entering the Harry Potter Creature Shop at London's Leavesden Studios will tell you, it's a bit like walking into a real magician's workshop. Every spare inch of the building is stuffed with creatures from the past several films, with a small army of artists and craftsmen creating new characters all the time. In one room, a technician could be using an electrostatic "flocker" to attach layers of hair to a centaur; in another, finishing touches are made on a multi-piece silicone makeup for the Greyback character and in a third, a member of the fur department works on a double for Mrs. Norris the cat.

But all of that is sadly in the past. With the final two-part installment of the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, now finished, Dudman's crew has moved on to other projects and the Creature Shop's contents are being boxed up and shipped off to various exhibitions around the world. It's the end of an era for what was arguably Harry's most magical behind-the-scenes department.

With a decade's worth of memories literally being packed up around him, Dudman finally has a few moments to talk

about his team's work on *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Although

he's still forbidden to discuss the secrets of *Part 2*, which won't be released until July 15th, there is no problem looking back over his contributions to *Part 1*.

"The biggest character we had to deal with in makeup terms," he recalls, "was Griphook, whom we haven't seen since the first film. He appears at the end of *Deathly Hallows: Part 1* and this time he's played by Warwick Davis, who is so good at wearing prosthetic makeup that we were really able to go to town with him. I've now made Warwick up so many times that I know what his face does and we had a

Along the way, Dudman's own hand-picked crew created a virtual menagerie of magical creatures of every size, shape, and description, from diminutive goblins to full-sized dragons.

lovely time doing it."

As long-time Harry Potter fans will recall, the character of Griphook, the diminutive Gringotts Bank goblin, was played in the first film by Verne Troyer, but Dudman gave the character a makeover for *Deathly Hallows*. "We produced a lovely silicone head as a concept for what Griphook would look like on Warwick and then had lots of discussions with [director] David Yates and the other Davids [producers Barron and Heyman] about that. I think we ended up changing the makeup three times, so he had a small goatee for the first test, which we lost, and we continued making subtle changes until we got it absolutely right."

In the end, there wasn't a part of the actor's head that wasn't covered, including an overlapping silicone appliance makeup, a pair of oversized contact lenses and a set of pointed teeth that could easily chop off the end of Davis' tongue if the actor wasn't careful. "It was a lot of hard work," Dudman confirms, "but Warwick is always a pleasure to work with. He knows what the makeup can and can't do and plays to its strengths."

Having applied the Griphook makeup off and on over a period of several months, Dudman admits it's easy to get a bit bored after a while. "You're doing the same job over and over again," he elaborates, "and you've chatted out all the things you have to talk about so you get silly and start doing silly things."

"With Warwick, we reached a point where I would write an obscene word on his forehead in mirror writing just before the forehead piece went on. The trick was that I had to do



Warwick Davis as the duplicitous Griphook

set, my chief prosthetic applicator, Katy Fray, called me and said, 'Um... we're getting some shadowing on the forehead; I think your word is coming through!' So there was a mad panic and a run down there for a little careful work with foam rubber grease paint just to be sure it didn't come through,

We also had some nasty stuff to do this time, which was a lot of fun.



it without hesitation, so I started off with a simple word but it got to the point where I was doing whole sentences and coming up with extremely long words. I must say I would even practice writing them, because the hardest thing was getting the 'Ns' right.

"I used to do this in eyebrow pencil every morning, but there was an awful day when I couldn't find the eyebrow pencil and picked up a Sharpie instead and did it and put the piece on. We finished the makeup, and about two hours later on the

set, my chief prosthetic applicator, Katy Fray, called me and said, 'Um... we're getting some shadowing on the forehead; I think your word is coming through!' So there was a mad panic and a run down there for a little careful work with foam rubber grease paint just to be sure it didn't come through,

"We actually sent Warwick to the set wearing flashing earrings one morning, because it was Christmas, and just because we found those earrings. Warwick was as good as gold. He went on set with his flashing earrings and acted totally deadpan about it, so people were staring at him and he would say, 'What?'"

Although Griphook was the major prosthetic makeup in *Part 1*, Dudman's team had plenty of minor effects and characters to keep them busy throughout the shoot. That included such returnees as Lord Voldemort, Mad-Eye Moody and Fenrir Greyback, the latter of whom was given a much more wolf-like look than in the previous film. "Dave Legeno the actor sort of disappeared under more and more silicone prosthetics," notes Dudman, "but I think it really suited the character. The makeup was very subtle in the previous movie, so we upped it this time and made it much wolfier. Katy Fray



Harry Potter invokes his inner Lon Chaney

applied that makeup too, with Jenna Wyatt helping.

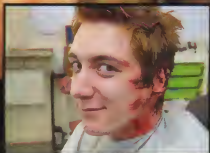
"We also had some nasty stuff to do this time, which was a lot of fun. George Weasley gets his ear blasted off by a spell, which was going to be a digital effect at first, but we ended up doing it practically, so we made a silicone piece that actually covered most of the side of his head...it was a great gag to do. It's very fresh and nasty in *Part 1*, with blood everywhere, and you begin to see it healed in *Part 2*.

So that was pretty graphic.

"There's also a sequence where Ron Weasley's shoulder gets 'splinched,' which was interesting to do. It's supposed to be a ghastly injury, so you think, A) what can we get away with, and B) how do you make it look interesting? There is a visual effect when a character appears or disappears, which is a whizzy double-spin thing and David Yates thought it would be nice to do something with a swirling quality to it.



I've got an eye on you.



"We did a series of sculpts, including one that looked like somebody had taken a two-inch potato peeler and dug a half-inch channel around the shoulder and down the arm. It's the kind of thing that couldn't happen for real, but that's what we went with and it looked extremely graphic. We actually did three stages, including a final stage that is very much knitted scar tissue and looked more socially acceptable."

Another effect that required a good deal of discussion was a scene in which Hermione casts a stinging jinx on Harry before they're caught by a gang of "snatchers." The spell causes Harry's face to swell up and become virtually unrecognizable, eventually wearing off in several stages. "That was quite an interesting one to tackle," remembers



Dudman. "[Concept artist] Martin Rezard produced a range of different looks, from which we created a series of sculpts.

"We eventually arrived at three separate stages. The first makeup covered Dan's entire face apart from one eye and because Harry has beard stubble at the time, the entire jaw line had to be hand-punched and matched with Dan's hair color, so that was a difficult makeup. Steve Murphy applied it with Paula Eden assisting and it worked a treat. Dan loved it and worked really well with the makeup, so I was quite pleased by it. When the footage is all cut together and you can see how it segues from one stage to another, it looks quite believable."

Looking ahead to *Deathly Hallows: Part 2*, Dudman is unable to go into specifics about what to

On Deathly Hallows pt. 2:
"I can't say anything else, but brace yourself!"

expect, other than to promise a *lot* more makeup effects than in *Part 1*, including a sequence in Gringotts that required several dozen makeup artists to complete. "I can't say anything else, but brace yourself!" he promises.

"With *Part 1*, it was nice to have a variety of different makeup effects and to be able to actually apply one of them myself was lovely. And putting a makeup on Warwick Davis is such a joy anyway, so being able to do that colored my whole experience on the entire movie.

"I think one of the things that I'm proudest of is that I've been able to put together such an incredible team, the core of which has worked with me throughout the last ten years. I've seen people go from being fresh-faced kids out of college to being fully competent prosthetic makeup artists who could hold their heads up in any company.

"By putting together the best team you possibly can," concludes Dudman, "the quality of your own work improves so much, and it's a pleasure to see. These people are all going out and doing their own thing now, but some of them, God willing, will come back and work for me again on whatever I do next."



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Pop-Culture's "Chosen One"

by Jenna Burnett

For the past fourteen years, the world has been on a witch hunt—for Harry Potter, that is. But this is no straight case of *Malleus Maleficarum*. The seven-volume coming of age tale, which began its journey in 1997, has escaped the confines of the bookshelf to cast a spell on “muggles” around the globe.

J.K. Rowling's popular fantasy series has sold more than 400 million copies worldwide, sparked a Warner Brothers movie franchise, inspired its own theme park, and gained a multi-national cult following. But the success of the *Potter* series goes far beyond the high-ranking sales and chart-topping successes.

The runaway success of the novels has been partially attributed to the rise in youth reading and increased book sales for large chain booksellers such as Barnes and Noble and Borders Books. Following the surprising popularity of the first book, the midnight release of each subsequent volume lured troupes of late-night patrons, decked out in their Hogwarts best, to bookstores worldwide as fans clamored to get their hands on the latest adventures of the boy wizard. With each volume selling out in a matter of hours, publishers decided to postpone sales until the end of the school week to avoid trusney as fans camped out to be the first in line to get their books.



Several schools even reported a number of maladies in association with the novels, such as the "Hogwarts Headaches" that sometimes followed six to eight hours of nonstop reading.

But very little of the Potter press has been negative. Besides its role in the increasing popularity of literature, Rowling's books have made their way into the realm of academia. College classes on Harry Potter theory and philosophy have sprung up on campuses worldwide, creating an entirely new field of literary analysis. Quidditch has become a new contact sport on campuses from Princeton to Boston University, as intramural teams re-enact the game on broomsticks in a slightly safer way; on the ground.

Potter parody is everywhere, from top spots on *Saturday Night Live* and *Family Guy* to an epic battle between Rowling and Stephen King on *Celebrity Death Match*. The series has also become a popular internet feature in the realm of weird news. Popular searches include concern over Potter paraphernalia (the infamous vibrating broomstick, for instance), a decline in the owl population in India, and Harry's immortalization in butter.

Of all these multimedia spin-offs, though, it's the film franchise – and its young stars – that has enjoyed the most ardent following. The release of the first film in 2001 built up a great deal of hype for newcomers Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, and Rupert Grint. The trio's stardom was practically instantaneous, with lines of screaming fans in full Harry Potter regalia waiting for hours on end to see the actors who brought their favorite characters to life. The billion dollar franchise has led to its own line of Harry Potter toys, games, and memorabilia.

In June 2010, Universal Studios in Florida unveiled The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. The \$285 million endeavor recreates many of the attractions of the novels, giving fans a place to live out their own wizarding fantasies. The attractions include tours through the Hogwarts Castle, a recreation of the Honeydukes candy shop, daring coaster rides to battle against the dragons of the fourth novel, and more. Whether the fancy comes from the films or the fiction, Harry Potter has undeniably put a generation under his spell.



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4SJ'S
IMAGI-MOVIESTM

H.P. LOVECRAFT'S
PICKMAN'S MODEL





I shivered slightly; then turned to follow him up a step and through a narrow door into a room of fair size, provided with a wooden floor and furnished as a studio.



The unfinished pictures on easels or propped against the walls were as ghastly as the finished ones upstairs, and shewed the painstaking methods of the artist.





There was something very disturbing about the nauseous sketches and half-finished monstrosities that leered around from every side of the room, and when Pickman suddenly unveiled a huge canvas on the side away from the light I could not for my life keep back a loud scream—the second I had emitted that night.



As I am a living being, I never elsewhere saw the actual breath of life so fused into a canvas. The monster was there—it glared and gnawed and gnawed and glared—and I knew that only a suspension of Nature's laws could ever let a man paint a thing like that without a model—without some glimpse of the nether world which no mortal unsold to the Fiend has ever had.

"Pickman's Model" excerpts taken from *The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Weird Stories* by H.P. Lovecraft, edited by S.T. Joshi, Penguin Classics 2001

Joshua Holline is a master photographer and horror artist. Holline stages his photo shoots like small movies, with sets, costumes, elaborate props, big machines, and special effects makeup. Everything is acted out live in front of the camera. Holline keeps his art close by frequently using friends and family members—including his daughters—as actors and crew.

"I believe that the horror story is ultimately concerned with the imminence and randomness of death, and the implication that there is no certainty to existence. The experience of horror resides in this confrontation with uncertainty. Horror tells us that our belief in security is delusional, and that the monsters are all around us."

—Joshua Holline
www.joshuaholline.com



Additional Photography Provided
 by Chad Michael Ward
www.digitalapocalypse.com



PROPHET OF HORROR: H.P. LOVECRAFT

BY CHARLES A. COULOMBE

ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY BOB EGGLETON AND PETER VON SHOLLY

If you love horror—in books, film, or photo—you owe H.P. Lovecraft a huge debt. Writers like Stephen King, Ramsey Campbell, Caitlin R. Kiernan, and the late Robert Bloch all spoke of his influence on them; the older folk among us will remember several creepy AIP movies (like the misnamed *Edgar Allan Poe's Haunted Palace*, which was taken from Lovecraft's *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*), or the trippy 1970 Dean Stockwell vehicle, *The Dunwich Horror*. A few *Night Gallery* stories were also derived from his work. More recently, efforts such as the *Re-Animator* series, *Necronomicon*, and the 2005 black-and-white silent *The Call of Cthulhu* have kept the work of the master shining bright on the silver screen. Video games abound with references to his work, and the 2.240,000 results from his name on Google at this very moment of writing show a more-than-passing interest in the Sage of Providence enveloping the cyber sphere.

But Lovecraft's influence is far greater than these facts suggest. The truth is that he completely revolutionized the genre, for better or worse. Prior to Lovecraft's time, horror and supernatural writing was more or less strictly tied to folklore and religion, and very much tied to questions of morality; even Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, for all its then-scientific trappings, was subtitled "The Modern Prometheus" after the mythological character who stole fire from the gods and paid an eternal price. But Lovecraft's work changed all that. His hapless protagonists blunder into horrifying

situations that neither garlic, crucifixes, nor blessed silver bullets can help; usually to be defeated by, or absorbed into, whatever evil they face. It is a truly frightening vision, and has echoes as far removed as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *Night of the Living Dead*. It has, perhaps, become the general modern mindset.

In spite of all this, Lovecraft has a much smaller readership today than many of the authors he influenced. But those who do read his work are fanatical about it, and they have reason to be. Literary critics from his day to ours have unmercifully dangled his style and content. Writer and literary critic Edmund Wilson declared that "the only real horror in most of these fictions is the horror of bad taste and bad art. Lovecraft was not a good writer." But Lovecraft is simply unequalled in creating an atmosphere of dread—and a dread that is somehow real. Whether in a decayed New England' backwater or some strange realm of Neverwas, the voyager in Lovecraft Country may not be frightened out of his wits, but he will constantly be looking over his shoulder, unsure of anything around him—a mood that may last long after his return to our world. In Lovecraft's work, everything we think we know about our surroundings is suspect; in, with, and under them pulsate things too hideous to contemplate directly.

The man himself,

however, is even lesser known than his work, for all that a sort of critical idol has grown up around posthumous "discovery" everything he ever wrote (mostly juvenilia, amateur journalism, and...er...horror). Literary critic S.T. Joshi has just unveiled a comprehensive two-volume biography of Lovecraft; Joshi and Robert Price have produced reams of biography and criticism of the man and his work. For all that, the details of Lovecraft's life, the sources of his inspiration, and his wide influence are little known to many horror film fans. What, then, was Howard Phillips Lovecraft? Born in Providence, Rhode Island in

1895, he was the son of an English immigrant and a daughter of one of New England's oldest families. Assistant consuls flooded the celebrated academies at Exeter and Andover. His father went mad when Lovecraft was a child, and the boy and his mother went to live in his paternal grandfather's mansion. Although ill health prevented him from graduating from high school (and eventually frustrated his desire to attend Brown University), he revelled in his grandfather's extensive library. The 19th-century works he found there gave him an enduring love of that era; other works on New England and its folklore contributed to his growing nostalgic sensibility.

From an early age Lovecraft was also interested in astronomy and the other sciences; under the influence of the rationalism of the period he gave up all belief in any sort of Christianity in his teen years, although to the end of his life he retained a love of old churches. As a child he had already begun to write stories of supernatural horror, which were never published; in 1914 he joined the amateur journalism movement. An important fid of its day, amateur journalism led all sorts of budding writers (on a voluntary basis) to hone their skills for an appreciative audience. Most of Lovecraft's earlier close friends were involved in it—and he met both of his great romances through amateur journalism. He started a number of magazines of his own (including a political journal called *The Conservative*), contributed to many more and was an associate editor of a few others. Here Lovecraft voiced, on the one hand, his

love of science and disdain for what he considered superstition; on the other, he gave full vent to his loathing of the "foreign invasion" of New England by various ethnic groups. Of course, it should be remembered that in a relatively short period of time, this movement had utterly transformed the region from the more-or-less homogenous English enclave it had been to the polyglot cornucopia it is today. Lovecraft's views should not surprise us; they were very common in his day. Even such a respected organization as Planned Parenthood originally maintained as one of its chief goals the elimination or limitation of birth among the "lesser," darker races. A great Anglophile, Lovecraft supported American entrance into World War I wholeheartedly.

In 1917, Lovecraft began writing supernatural fiction again. Edgar Allan Poe, Irish fantasist Lord Dunsany, and Welsh horror writer Arthur Machen were his initial models, and he was soon producing stories of great power and bite. He began selling stories to the pulp magazines, primarily the renowned *Weird Tales*. Numbering about 60 in all, it is these stories which would later establish him as a major writer.

But in personal terms, Lovecraft's life was far from happy. After his grandfather died, financial difficulties forced the writer, along with his mother and two maiden aunts, to move into a much smaller house. As the ladies died one by one, Lovecraft's circumstances became ever more strained,

although his writing did bring in a little money—most of which he eked out by ghost writing. Lovecraft had some notable clients in this regard, such as Harry Hoodini.

Lovecraft's romantic life came to him through his activities in amateur journalism. The fantastically beautiful poetess, Winifred Virginia Jackson, was a fellow practitioner of the trade, and for a while they were quite close. But this relationship came to an end when he met the president of the National Amateur Journalism Association, Sonia Greene (1883-1972). Born in Russia of Jewish descent, Greene had fled an abusive marriage and worked as a milliner in a New York department store. There, she was successful enough to live a middle class life and educate her daughter, Florence (later better known as the journalist Carol Wild). In 1924, Lovecraft and Greene were married at St. Paul's Chapel in Manhattan, the oldest public building on the island (and also, doubtless pleasing to Lovecraft's monarchist views, the only one retaining a symbol of Crown authority, in the Prince of Wales' feathers over the pulpit).

Unfortunately, after their marriage, Sonia's attempt at a private millinery business failed, money dried up, and her health required long stays in hospitals. She accepted a job in the Midwest, and Lovecraft moved into a single room. There, his hatred of New York grew ever stronger, despite the presence of many of his friends. Lovecraft could think of nothing more than returning home; his nuns, however, vetoed





H.P. Lovecraft reshaped the horror genre. From the by-then customary stories of spirits and vampires, graveyards and castles, he moved on to what he himself called “vistas of cosmic horror.”

any idea of Sonia setting up a business there. Sonia filed for divorce, although (unknown to Sonia, who unwittingly remarried) Lovecraft never signed final decree. Although he and his wife parted on amicable terms, his stay in New York underlined his horror of the modern city; he returned thereafter to Providence.

But this sojourn, together with trips to Charleston, New Orleans and, above all, Quebec, widened his outlook considerably. Quebec not only inspired a guide-book to the city and its environs (still popular in *La Belle Province* today), it gave him a love of French-Canadian culture and a grudging sympathy for Catholicism which never left him. Even the formerly despised Italians become heroic in the last of Lovecraft's tales to appear in his lifetime, “The Hânanier of the Dark.”

That sympathy apparently did not extend to the Jews, for all that his wife (finances had more to do with their breakup than ethnicity), and many close friends, such as Samuel Loveman, were Jewish. Long after Lovecraft died, Greene informed Loveman of the extent of Lovecraft's anti-Semitism; in response, both of them burned many of his letters to them. Again, however, these views

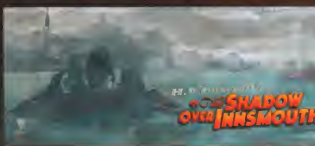
were far from unknown among American intellectuals of that pre-Holocaust era, from activist Margaret Sanger to journalist H.L. Mencken. Also, August Derleth insisted that Lovecraft's views had softened in this area before he died: Greene would disagree with the assessment, but she had no real contact with Lovecraft after their separation.

In politics, Lovecraft was quite convinced the wrong side had triumphed in the American Revolution. In his travel guide to Quebec, he writes of that conflict; “There now broke out – in 1775 that unhappy warfare between His Majesty's thirteen more southerly colonies and the home government; which culminated in the loss of those colonies to the Empire, and which may in times to come bring about their tragic engulfment in a new and alien barbarism of mongrel and autochthonous origin, in which all the standards of civilisation will

be lost in a brainless worship of size, speed, wealth, success, and luxury, sad chapter to record!” In his letters, he was quite vocal in these views. While his monarchism remained intact, his view of American day-to-day politics did change, as he made the mental trek from the typical conservative Republicanism of his time to qualified support for the New Deal.

Lovecraft's prose work falls roughly into two categories. Such tales as “The Dunwich Horror” and “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” provide a deeply atmospheric New England scene – in the tradition of Hawthorne and Poe – behind whose more or less traditional folkloric motifs lurk strange and alien beings from beyond whom humanity means little. A whole secondary New England, centering on the mythical town of Arkham with its Miskatonic University, was devised. This is the setting for the so-called “Cthulhu Mythos,” named after one of the leading beings. The second category, epitomized by such works as “The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath,” featured a dream-landscape drawn from his own slumbers. In any case, the traditional categories of good and evil were not so much destroyed in Lovecraft's tales as they were sidestepped or ignored. In the Lovecraftian universe, the entities terrorizing the characters generally bore no malice toward their victims, anymore than an individual stepping on an insect gives much thought to the act.

From whence did Lovecraft's stories spring? As with any author, it is a hard question. But his letters give some clues. *At the Mountains of Madness* owes the fearfulness of its description of Antaretic cold to Lovecraft's own deep hatred of, and physical susceptibility to, less-than-temperate weather – no small concern for one confined by New England winters.



H. P. Lovecraft's
“THE SHADOW
OVER INNSMOUTH”



Cthulhu's Domain by Bob Eggleton

The topical played a big role in his work as well. Antarctic expeditions were much in the news when *Mountains* came out, and the fell world of Yuggoth was a surrogate for newly-discovered Pluto. His dislike of aliens and non-whites was reflected in the various (and disgusting) trans-species couplings that litter his work. As Andrew E. Rothovius points out in his masterful essay, "Lovecraft and the New England Megaliths," the woefully-inbred region of Dunwich owes much to the rural towns drowned beneath the Quabbin Reservoir (a flooding which also inspired "The Colour Out of Space," itself the progenitor of the 1965 Boris Karloff vehicle, *Die, Monster, Die!*), while the weird stones on the summits of Dunwich are borrowed from such sites as Mystery Hill, New Hampshire. This writer has long speculated that the doleful denizens of Innsmouth may have been partly inspired by a section of Seabrook

Village, New Hampshire. "The Whisperer in Darkness" appears to reference some of the weird lore of Vermont's Glazenbury Mountain, while the cult of Cthulhu's resemblance to the real-world 18th century New Light cult of Shadrach Ireland has been pointed out by Rothovius and others.

pulp during his lifetime; Lovecraft carried on a huge correspondence with many budding writers, to whom he gave much-needed guidance and affection — although he did not meet the majority of them. Such figures as Robert Bloch, Fritz Leiber, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard,

Frank Belknap Long, and Donald Wandrei were all members of the "Lovecraft Circle." Another was of course Forrest J Ackerman, later to found this magazine (and for whom, in his correspondence, Lovecraft coined a number of jesting

AD CRITICOS

The September, 1913, issue of *The Argosy* published HPL's letter to the editor criticizing the efforts of Fred Jackson — one of the magazine's regular contributors. This elicited a series of attacks on Lovecraft in the editorial columns of the next two issues. "Among those hostile compositions was a piece of tetrameter verse by one John Russell, of Tampa, Fla., which had in it so much native wit, that I resolved to answer it. Accordingly I sent *The Argosy* a 44-line satire in the manner of Pope's *Dunciad*. This was duly printed in January, 1914, & it created an immense sensation..." (SL 19)

But in a real sense, all of this tells us simply where the dressing for his stories came from, Oné (if not the primary one) of his major sources was in fact his own dreams. Very many of his weird creatures be quite literally dreamed up, to include the horribly tentacled Cthulhu.

Although his work was confined to the

nicknames, as was his custom — one of which was "The Effjay of Akkamin"). Most notable, in light of his later activity, was August Derleth, who eventually co-founded Arkham House to publish Lovecraft's work; it later developed into one of the foremost publishers of fantastic and horrific fiction. It is in his

correspondence with and encouragement of other writers that the better part of Lovecraft's character shines through. As with his anti-Semitism, he never allowed his many personal prejudices to prevent his forming close friendships with people, regardless of his own views of whatever group they belonged to, or personal idiosyncrasies or vices they held.

Nevertheless, Lovecraft's own financial circumstances continued to deteriorate. His later letters have a number of references to cutting costs by eating such fare as canned beans. At last, afflicted with intestinal cancer and malnourishment, he died in his native city of Providence, Rhode Island in 1937. Save for the relative few who knew him either personally or through his writings, he died unknown. The *Federal Writer's Project Guide to Rhode Island* (one of a series

of books covering the entire country, which emphasized mention of local writers), which appeared the year after his death, made no reference to Lovecraft. His works were by then nearly unavailable to the general public; if ever a writer died in obscurity, it was Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

This, however, was soon to change. As mentioned, August Derleth co-founded Arkham House with Donald Wandrei in order to put Lovecraft's work back into print, and keep it there – a mission it has successfully maintained. Derleth has come under a great deal of criticism from various Lovecraft aficionados because of alleged mishandling and misunderstanding of Lovecraft's work. While the latter may perhaps be true (as a believing Catholic,

Derleth's world view had little in common with that of Lovecraft), none should question that without his contribution, Lovecraft's canon would have sunk without a trace.

Instead, H.P. Lovecraft reshaped the horror genre. From the by-the-then customary stories

of spirits and vampires, graveyards and castles, he moved on to what he himself called "vistas of cosmic horror" – the fate of mankind in a universe at best indifferent, at worst malevolent toward humanity and its concerns. In Lovecraft's work, the hapless protagonists are pitted against beings and forces which are not only evil, but *alien*. In expressing this then extremely original vision, he affected not only the famous immediate members of his circle, but virtually every horror writer from his own time to ours. Horror scribes, including Stephen King, still produce stories in the Cthulhu Mythos, ranging from barely readable pastiche to powerful original works; genre stalwarts Ramsey Campbell and Brian Lumley got their start in this way.

But there is far more to Lovecraft than this achievement, both as a man and as a writer. His much-neglected poetry is, in some cases, extremely fine; his sadly neglected "Old Christmas" and "October" are among the finest tributes to their respective seasons written in the 20th century, in this writer's opinion. Lovecraft managed to combine a love of traditional customs and mores and very conservative politics with a total lack of religious belief and maintenance of what he considered to





The Mighty Cthulhu emerges from the depths

be a rigorously scientific outlook. In this, too, he had much in common with other of his contemporaries, such as Lucius Beebe, H.L. Mencken, and George Santayana. Such a mix of nostalgia and futurism was far from uncommon in their period.

Moreover, through his book-length essay, *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, and other writings, Lovecraft virtually invented serious literary criticism of horror, a genre which before had been considered too "trashy" to merit serious scholarly attention. Horror movie fans will recognize a similar development in film criticism.

Unlike them, however, and although he came of a good background, Lovecraft was poverty-stricken for most of his life. Despite his cosmopolitan interests and circle of friends and pen pals, he spent most of his life in Providence, Rhode Island, save for the short and disastrous stay in Manhattan that coincided with his equally brief marriage. Yet, from these unpromising circumstances, Lovecraft mined literary gold. Unappreciated in his lifetime, he came, like Poe, to have a large following in

Europe, and finally in the United States—as with J.R.R. Tolkien (and for partially the same reasons), he really only came into his own in America during the 1960s.

Few today, perhaps, would find most of his social and political views to their liking. Even so, H.P. Lovecraft has much to tell those living in the early 21st century; partly because, like us, he was forced to orient himself in strange and transitional times. But also because, though he was a failure financially, he showed how the creative spirit can triumph over adverse circumstances and personal limitations, and leave a legacy of great and enduring value. Lovecraft was a striking example of downward mobility; yet despite his ever-worsening economic position, his letters rarely show bitterness. With humor, kindness, and the life of the mind he fought against his own and others' psychological woes during the Great Depression.

In his entry on Lovecraft in the *Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural*, Douglas Rebillard wrote: "It would be difficult to overestimate

the value of this work and the equally devoted scholarship of the last forty years. Bibliographies have appeared and supplemented earlier works; these culminate in the extensive study by S.T. Joshi (1981), who also gathered an excellent collection of critical articles (1980) [and later wrote an excellent specialized biography]. There have been biographical articles and memoirs, and the full-length biography by L. Sprague De Camp, however open to criticism, is a standard and much-needed work. Serious critical studies have also been published. What remains is for Lovecraft to be accepted, as an important figure in our century, into the mainstream of American literature." Indeed, he belongs there, alongside his beloved Poe and Hawthorne. What Lovecraft wrote in his closing lines of *Supernatural Horror in Literature* is certainly true of his own work: "...who shall declare the dark theme a positive handicap? Radiant with beauty, the Cup of the Ptolemies was curven of onyx."

BOB EGGLETON

BY APRIL SNELLINGS



It is entirely correct to call Bob Eggleton a world-renowned horror, fantasy, and science fiction artist — a nine-time Hugo award-winner whose work has appeared on book covers and movie screens around the world. Even if you don't know his name, you've probably seen his art. The monstrous skulls he painted for the covers of Brian Lumley's *Necroscope* series became some of the signature images of the horror literature boom of the '80s, and he has contributed a number of illustrations to *Magick: The Gathering*. Even young children have seen Eggleton's creations; he has designed creatures for several movies, including 2001's *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*.



passion along the way: the work of H.P. Lovecraft. *Famous Monsters* recently talked with Eggleton about eldritch horrors, cosmic evil, and wiggly tentacles.

AS. How did you discover Lovecraft?

BE. That goes back to when I saw the paperbacks in the 1970s. I thought they were fairly scary stuff. And further, I'd seen his

name as the basis for the story to the 1965 film *The Monster Die!* starring Boris Karloff and Nick Adams. So naturally, I found *The Colour Out of Space*, and Lovecraft became part of my fantastical life. I never knew he was born and lived in Providence, Rhode Island, near where I live. I've been to his grave and stomping grounds.

AS. Two of your most enduring passions are kaiju and Lovecraft. Besides the obvious — really big monsters — what connections can you draw between your two favorite themes?

BE. It's the same thing I see in a movie like *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It's a sense of scale. I like big things compared to small things. Man is like an ant to something the size of Godzilla, yet Godzilla is dwarfed by something the size of a planet, and so on. Kaiju, like *Godzilla* and Lovecraftian eldritch beasts, all have mythical origins that go back to the dawn of time. No one knows where they are from but they form a kind of modern myth if you will. Like a modern St. George and the Dragon.

AS. Beyond Lovecraft's own descriptions, are there any points of reference that you've found helpful in visualizing his creations?

BE. His descriptions were both vague and specific. One

But none of this tells you what Eggleton truly is: a monster-maker of the very highest order. He is a modern-day Victor Frankenstein who prefers brushes to scalpels, building fearsome beasts from layers of color and shadow instead of pilfered corpses.

Like practically every creature designer before him, Eggleton's love of monsters was fueled by a boyhood fascination with dinosaurs. A visit to the Sinclair dinosaur exhibit at the 1964 New York World's Fair prompted Eggleton's mother to buy him an Ideal Toys *Godzilla* game, and he never looked back. Eggleton remains an ardent *Godzilla* fan; but he has acquired another monstrous



Eggleton's original AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS concept art for the cover of FM 255.

description of Cthulhu was something like "the thing with the awful squid head." I go to the source material, and sort of use my imagination from that end.

The Shoggoth from *At the Mountains of Madness* is a good case in point. It's this huge, undulating black blob with eyes and mouths. It can form tentacles and use them to push itself along or capture prey. In the same book he has the albino penguins, which are almost funny in their description — huge, white, six-foot-high screeching penguins that make the specific sound of "Tekali-li." What's funnier or more sympathetic than a penguin? And yet Lovecraft manages to scare us with these things!

AS. What is it about Lovecraft's work that captivates you?

BE. The idea that he's writing what is on the surface — horror — but in reality it's science fiction. His horrific demons and monsters are in fact alien creatures from dark realms in space. His portrayal of space is dark and scary. This idea has carried over into many films, such as the 1967 Hammer classic *Quatermass and the Pit*, and even things like *Alien*, wherein it's horror but with science fiction wrappings. I also like myth and lore, and Lovecraft created his own mythos and worked in his own universe. Later, other authors shared his universe. One of these writers was Brian Lumley, and that's who I did a majority of my Lovecraft-inspired monsters for, Cthulhu and Dagon being two. It was terrific doing *At the Mountains of Madness* for this issue's variant cover. I always loved that book and wanted to tackle that. Lovecraft also had a writing style that was really unique. He used sentences and descriptions like "They died with the screams still in their throats." If that doesn't get you, what does?





ST. JOSHI: THE LOVECRAFT HISTORIAN

BY JESSIE LILEY



because interested in adults edited by Alfred 1960s in the library. I had



produced when August Derleth was pretty ill [he would die the next year], and it almost seems as if it is a set of uncorrected proofs. In "The Mound" there is the hilarious error of "Old Bones" as opposed to "Old Ones"! That has become a running joke with Lovecraft scholars. There is also a ridiculous error in the very first paragraph of "The Whisperer in Darkness". The uncorrected text reads: "Notwithstanding the deep things I saw and heard..." Deep things? What could that mean? In fact, a line has been omitted: "Notwithstanding the deep extent to which I shared the information and speculations of Henry Kkeley, the things I saw and heard..." Much better!

I had the great fortune to be in contact with scholar and editor, S.T. Joshi, a *humblebrag* by many to be the foremost authority extant on Lovecraft's work, who, *unbeknownst* to Joshi, gave generously of his time and knowledge.

To the source of our conversations I found myself wanting to learn more about this driven individual, and what shaped him to his life's work.

Famous Monsters. When did you first discover Lovecraft and what, specifically, drew you to his work?

S.T. Joshi. I think I must have stumbled upon Lovecraft at about the age of fourteen at the public library in Muncie, Indiana. This was in 1972. I had already

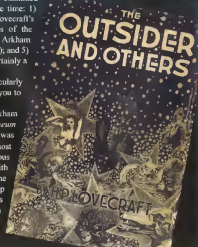
horror and fantasy fiction, having read several anthologies of horror stories for young not heard of Lovecraft, but the titles sounded interesting. I made the tactical error of starting with *At the Mountains of Madness*—but that novel simply proved too much for me at the time and I put it aside. I then started with *The Dunwich Horror and Others* (1963)—and the first story that really bit me was "The Rats in the Walls." After that, I was hooked! I had never encountered such a fusion of rich, complex prose and wild, outrageous images and conceptions. There is something about Lovecraft that grabs you by the throat at that age. He doesn't fiddle around with conventional ghosts and vampires, but creates an entire universe of appalling—but fascinating—horror that is almost literally hypnotizing.

FM. I read that you found 1,500 textual errors in *At the Mountains of Madness*, and these errors set you on the road you continue to follow today. Which edition of the story did you read, so we'll know what not to purchase?

STJ. When I got to Brown University in 1976, I was encouraged to look over Lovecraft's manuscripts and compare them with the printed texts—these were the same 1960s Arkham House editions that were being kept in print. So those 1,500 errors (many of them, admittedly, punctuation errors) were found in the 1964 Arkham House edition of *At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels*. There was one page that had 43 errors in it. I remember one time when I examined five different texts of that novel at the same time: 1) Lovecraft's handwritten manuscript; 2) Lovecraft's typescript; 3) Lovecraft's annotated copies of the *At the Mountains of Madness* serialization; 4) the first Arkham House edition (*The Outside and Others*, 1939); and 5) the 1964 Arkham House edition. That was certainly a bizarre experience!

FM. Can you give us one or two particularly egregious examples of the errors that drove you to research the manuscripts?

STJ. Some of the worst errors in the Arkham House editions occur in *The Horror in the Museum* and *Other Revisions* (1970). I think that book was



FM. I've read of an annotated two-volume work coming out from Bloodletting Press. What can we expect?

STJ. I have annotated nearly every Lovecraft story, essay, and poem (and am working on a long-term project to publish every letter by Lovecraft—in 25 volumes or more!). But what I had not done was to annotate Lovecraft's revisions, which are highly interesting documents in terms of their genesis and composition, even if some of them are not exactly stellar works of literature in their own right. So I prepared a two-volume annotated edition of the revisions for Bloodletting Press. Many of the revisions contain highly interesting pieces of information; stories like "The Mound" and even "The Electric Executioner" (a pretty bad story) show Lovecraft's knowledge of the ancient history of the Southwest, while even such a slight story as "Poetry and the Gods" displays Lovecraft's prodigious learning in classical Greek myth.

FM. How would you sum up Lovecraft as he relates to your own life?

STJ. I'm always fond of repeating Robert Bloch's comment, "Lovecraft was my university." Even though I myself received very good schooling (at Brown and Princeton, among others), I have found that studying Lovecraft has opened up all kinds of interesting subjects of research that I might never have followed otherwise. My work on Lord Dunsany, Arthur Machen, Clark Ashton Smith, Ambrose Bierce, and George Sterling might never have occurred if Lovecraft hadn't piqued my interest in these writers. Even my several books on atheism owe a great deal to Lovecraft.

H.P. Lovecraft historian, S.T. Joshi.



Lovecraft: The Style of the Prophet

by Brad Linaweaver

"The imaginative writer devotes himself to art in its most essential sense."

H. P. Lovecraft

Fritz Leiber famously said that Lovecraft was the Copernicus of Horror. One of the generation of writers most influenced by him, Leiber placed HPL as a central figure at the very beginning of a new astronomy of fiction where mankind is no longer at the center of things.

In common with other pioneers, Lovecraft invited those of a sympathetic bent to join his dream quest. Robert Bloch summed it up (in a letter to me, March 11, 1993):

"As for HPL himself, he never expressed his intentions regarding the power of his 'myths' to influence writers in other genres. He welcomed use of his concepts and cosmology in stories by members of the 'Lovecraft Circle' as, you know, but his attitude (expressed and explicit in so much of his correspondence) was that it was kind of an amusing literary game in which he invited his colleagues to participate just for the fun of it."

He satisfies our visual imagination by describing the most bizarre alien physiology and structures and technology. Then he tells us that these creatures had something that frightened them. We have already exorcised the pictures in our head before he tells us of something we can't visualize. Some horror writers describe and some only hint at what lies beyond. The Lovecraft method is to do both.

An example is the appearance of the sluggho. One of the characters cannot process the gargantuan size and speed of this pulsating, multi-eyed, glowing super worm. He can only relate the experience to seeing a subway train at night. Lovecraft got the idea for this monster from seeing such a train. Unlike other writers, he doesn't hide the source of his inspiration. He uses it to increase our unease.

In his essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature," HPL laid out most of his influences. Many fine writers are honored. He never denied the schism of those who came before.

Why yes, there is inspiration from Robert W. Chambers. And look, there's the sorcery of Arthur Machen. There is no denying the power of Guy de Maupassant. Let us not forget his fellow *Weird Tales* alumnus, Clark Ashton Smith. The point is what Lovecraft made of this raw material, all his voluminous reading. He was also well read in the Classics. He was well versed in Latin and could do proper sonnets among his many poems.

No one else writes like Lovecraft because no one else thinks like Lovecraft. He was one of a kind.

This is an excerpt from Brad Linaweaver's "The Man Who Led His Craft" which will appear in *Mondo Culi* #3.

Yog-Sothoth & the Bikini Machine

A.I.P. Does H.P. Lovecraft

by Ron Garmon

The posthumous self-life of Edgar Allan Poe proves that writing well is the best change of all. Despised and unfairly reviled in his lifetime and for generations after his death, Poe and his literary reputation could, by the 1960s, withstand far worse assault than anything American International Pictures could offer. Indeed, the company's splashy cycle of Poe-inspired horror films, most of them starring Vincent Price and all the best ones directed by Roger Corman, was probably the cleverest, most playful introduction to a significant body of American lit ever whipped up by Hollywood. More or less successful attempts to film the more outre stretches of the national canon, like *Naked Lunch* or *Blade Runner*, owe quite a lot to A.I.P.'s Poe series in the way eccentric, purely literary classics were reworked as midnight-movie Gargol.

Of these many homages and knockoffs, none owe more to the Poe films than the company's two-movie H.P. Lovecraft cycle. Both are widely spaced in terms of style and chronology, and both were helmed by the company's longtime art director/set designer Daniel Haller. Of the two, *Die, Monster, Die!* (1965) is the better and better-known — a slow-moving and elegantly creepy adaptation of the writer's 1927 story



...that was the terrifying thing in the PIT that wanted women?



"The Colour Out of Space" starring elderly genre titan Boris Karloff in one of his last leading roles in a horror film. Long available on various media and still a TV favorite around Halloween, this 80-minute weird science-fantasy is at best only two percent Lovecraft to ninety-eight percent sickly-green seltzer. This still makes it a mid-decade peak for A.I.P., whose staid Capitol Hill logo was better known for giddy fluff like *Beach Blanket Bingo* and *Dr. Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine*. American International's basic narrative formula — as common as themes of upper class oppression in Hammer's gothic monster movies — relied heavily on the travails of the young and the pretty in order to connect with the overwhelmingly teenage and young adult film audience of the period.

Screenwriter Jerry Sohl, unlike fellow A.I.P. scribes Robert Towne (*Tomb of Ligeia*) or Richard Matheson (*House of Usher*, *Pit and the Pendulum*), took few chances with the source material, fashioning a straightforward boy-rescues-girl-from-old-dark-house thriller out of the original story's jabbering paranoid frenzy. Serious young American Stephen Reinhart (Nick Adams) detains in distant Arkham (relocated from Lovecraft's Massachusetts to somewhere east of Runnymede, U.K.) in search of Susan Witley (Suzan Farmer), a girl he knew from school. Cold-shouldered by locals when asking directions, Reinhart proceeds on foot through ever-sicklier vistas to Witley Manor, where he dines with happy Susan, her scowling pa Nahum (Boris), ailing ma Letitia (Freda Jackson), and a fishlike butler (Terence de Marney) who slides over dead halfway through the entrée. The place, we find, is

doubly cursed — irradiated by fragments of glowing green meteorite and haunted by Nahum's mad dreams of redeeming the family's tainted name. Soon, Reinhart's efforts to understand the murderous alien life flourishing so uncomfortably close yield before the necessity of rescuing Susan from it as the vines start creeping in.

In outline, this doesn't sound far removed from many other eight-reel terrors that were rolling out of Hammer, Cinecittà, and other studios for the worldwide youth cinema market. Indeed, Haller does a brisk and credible job of steeping the audience in eldritch *Weird Tales* atmospherics without much aid from the script. The sets, as one might expect, are fantastically detailed and subtly lit, with Lovecraft's gnarly flow of adjectives and overheated nouns finessed into décor and artful framing. The *mise-en-scène* has the feel of a Doré illustration, with almost every setup strikingly different from the comic-panel compositions favored by Hammer and Amicus, A.I.P.'s competitors at the horror end of the international film market. Karloff turns in one of the best of his late-career performances as Nahum, completely dominating every frame he's in. The rest of the above-named cast, with one exception, takes it seriously as the Hammer vets they were; a side benefit is the preservation of an accomplished and completely superfluous performance by Irish stage legend Patrick McGee

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as a broken, alcoholic doctor. McGee was so important an inspiration to Nobel Prize-winning playwright Samuel Beckett that his mere presence adds theatrical luster at the Olivier and Gielgud level.

The exception to this general feast of competence is Nick Adams, and the results are nearly fatal to *Die, Monster, Die!*

At 34, Adams was a long way from his unaffected boyish charm in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Few of Hollywood's fresh young faces ever spent a harder decade. His natural humor as a performer seemed to diminish as the movies got cheaper, and the years spent on the party circuit with the likes of Elvis Presley weren't kind to him. Adams campaigned heavily for a Best Supporting Actor nomination for his part in *Twilight of Honor* (1963) and got it, but lost the actual Oscar to Melvyn Douglas' patriarch in *Hud*—largely because most of the younger actor's best scenes were cut. Several public freak-outs and reverses occurred between the Oscar loss and the start of production on Daniel Haller's directorial debut, and the actor's unnaturally stiff and medicated performance blows a big hole in the screen. He is every bit as unlikable and smug a screen presence as John Agar in all those Universal big-bug cheapies of the 1950s, only in place of Agar's ironic smirk, there's... *nothing*.

Adams' showing here was just another jolt on a long way down that would end with a fatal prescription drug overdose in early 1968, when the actor was only 36-years-old. Karloff would outlive him by a little more than a year. Haller would go on to direct *Devil's Angels* (1967) and *The Wild Racers* (1968) before landing another supernatural assignment, which just happened to be *The Dunwich Horror* (1970) from a script by, among other hands, Curtis Hanson, later to helm big-budget fare like *L.A. Confidential* and *8 Mile*. The original story, which first appeared in the April 1929 issue of *Weird Tales*, is one of the

Die Monster Die!

central texts of Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos; the screenwriters hew fairly close to this most uncharacteristically sunny of the author's yarns, as Good actually triumphs over nameless, slithering Evil.

The hip boy/girl quotient is better managed in Haller's second trip into the ooze, with fading teen goddess Sandra Dee as dainty bait set out by loonytoons Wilbur Whateley (Dean Stockwell) to rouse sleeping alien deity Yog-Sothoth and bring on the destruction of all humanity. To this end, Wilbur also swipes a carelessly guarded copy of the *Necronomicon* (following the attentions of elderly Dr. Henry Armitage (Hubley Sr.), angry Sheriff Hanson (Jason Wingreen, who's a bartender from *All in the Family*), and gun-totter Doc (in nearby Dunwich, a town since moved look-alike to that ancient curse to somewhere near Mendocino, California).

They are fashionable elements of *Rosemary's Baby* in the plot and Haller throws in a few solarized shots that wouldn't have been out of place in artier fare like Jack Smight's *Girl on a Motorcycle* or *The Trip* by Roger Corman, who is along for the ride here as producer. The director makes less into more, using expressionistic camera effects and a strategically placed wind machine for the Elder God's final rampage, and it's plain he's learned quite a bit about location shooting since *Doc, Monster, Die!* Dee is pretty and inoffensive, and Stockwell's performance is an amusingly coiled spring of lunacy. This was Hubley Sr.'s

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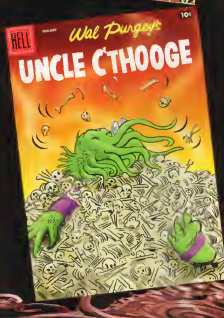
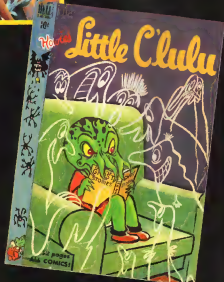
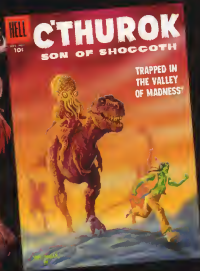
next-to-last film and the Oscar-winner looks somewhat befuddled in a role plainly meant for Karloff or Basil Rathbone, both A.I.P. regulars sadly deceased since Haller's last fling at Lovecraft. The *Dunwich Horror* is far better than the Poe/Vincent Price series that was just then grinding to a halt with inferior fodder like *The Oblong Box* and *Cry of the Banshee*.

Subsequent events would show the gothic horror film was far from done for by 1970, and the vogue for H.P. Lovecraft appears to be eternal. It's tempting, in retrospect, to curse the company's decision to abandon any projected Lovecraft series as both economically and aesthetically shortsighted. There are enough deranged premises and plot mechanics in the writer's vast bibliography for a century's worth of drive-in horror movies, and other hands would soon help themselves.

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SPREADING THE WEIRD SINCE 1950

If Lovecraft wrote comic books...



HALLOWEEN IN PROVIDENCE

4SJ vs HPL!



Clash of the Titans? 1933: In The Fantasy Fanz, a popular fanzine of its day, Fory disparaged the work of Clark Ashton Smith, one of HPL's close friends and correspondents, saying "The thrilling scientific, 'King Kong' for instance, has no room to it—except, perhaps, to be careful of Fay Wray, if you are a great pre-historic ape—but it has a point at least to interest. And 'Dweller in Marian Death' didn't interest me. I don't know, maybe it did others. But it disappointed me very greatly to find it in a scientific publication. In 'Weird Tales' all right I don't like that type of story, I wouldn't read it there. I fail to find anything worthwhile in an endless procession of ethereal lives, phantastic visions, ultra-mundane life, exotic paradises, airy vegetation, whispering flutes, ghostly plains, and dingo-like horrors. May the ink dry up in the pen from which they flow!" This precipitated an acknowledgment War of the Worlds between Fory and Smith's defenders. Lovecraft, noting a salvo by young Robert H. Barlow, who would eventually become his chosen Literary Executor commented "And you've given that ass Ackerman a dose in the PF. He is apparently an habitual pest—a superficial smart-Aleck who enjoys flaying abuse around promiscuously. A year or two ago he wrote me a very silly and modest letter attacking my 'Colour Out of Space' & I shot him a rather home on deluding reply." In another letter to Barlow HPL wrote "Ackerman represents a millionfold exaggeration of a kind of smart-alec vanity and publicity-seeking which we all have to some extent in youth." Fascinating to imagine these two powerful personalities as contentious contemporaries but so it was during the busy heyday of the pulp; Fory fighting for purity in Science Fiction and Lovecraft, looking out on behalf of a besieged friend and colleague.

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The CALL OF CTHULHU

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"Mr. Cthulhu! We Have a Call for Mr. Cthulhu!" A Discussion on 2005's The Call of Cthulhu With Andrew Leman & Sean Branney

by Jessie Lilley and Brad Linaweaver

Lovecraft fans will recognize the names Andrew Leman and Sean Branney as the talented filmmakers who did the impossible, filmed the unfilmable, which begs the question: Whatever possessed them to do *The Call of Cthulhu*?

"The second movie [Andrew and I] did together was a mockumentary in 2001 or 2002, called *A Shoggoth on the Roof*," says Branney. "We took it up to the Lovecraft Film Festival in Portland, and a lot of the folks up there enjoyed it. After that we did some Lovecraftian Christmas carols. People really liked those, and we finally came to the conclusion that we didn't just want to do comedic Lovecraft stuff. We wanted to do a serious adaptation of a Lovecraft story."

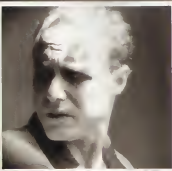
The prevailing wisdom used to be that the stories of H. P. Lovecraft did not translate well into film. The accusation was always the same: too much mood and atmosphere, not enough characterization.

There is only one problem with that analysis: It makes no sense. Horror is all about mood and atmosphere. As for characterization, HPL was not above using the same character types as other writers of the macabre -- from simple country folk to the obsessed scholar, first cousin of the mad scientist.

What he avoided was the hackneyed situation and superficial emotions. In other words, adapting these idiosyncratic nightmares into melodramatic screenplays is hard work! That was why it took so long to get the movies.

The Call of Cthulhu, a faithful adaptation of the first true Mythos story, is the mutated fruit of a brave but reactionary idea: What if a silent movie had been made of this seminal story around the time it was first published?

HPL went to the cinema. We know that his favorite film was of the sound era, *Berkeley Square*. He didn't care for all the



Martin Wately and Daniel Keemon in the background in
THE WHISPERER IN DARKNESS.

imaginative talkies. He disliked Tod Browning's *Dracula* and James Whale's *Frankenstein*. On the other hand, he was favorably impressed with James Whale's *The Invisible Man*.

But never mind the 1930s. He saw more movies in the golden age of the silent film, in the Roaring Twenties. And this is what he had to say about the greatest horror film of the twenties in a letter to Lillian Clark on September 18, 1925: "Horror lifted its grisly visage -- I could not have been made drowsy by all the opiates under heaven! Ugh!!! The face that was revealed when the mask was pulled off . . ."

Whatever preference Lovecraft had for unseen terrors in cinema, he was enthralled by the sight of Lon Chaney's Erik in *The Phantom of the Opera*. Given his druthers, he might have preferred seeing his work in a silent film even after the invention of those new fangled talking pictures.

The *Call of Cthulhu* would have to be his favorite cinematic adaptation. Leman, Brannery, and their collaborators took a limited budget and an insane amount of perseverance to make a perfect film for an audience of one: the ghost of Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

According to Leman, *The Call of Cthulhu* was inspired by *The Old Man and the Goblins*, a black and white, silent short made by Mark Caballero and Seamus Walsh. "It was a 1920s-style puppet animation film that we saw at the Portland festival," he says. "It was so beautiful and atmospheric—



and evocative—that it started me thinking, 'What if we were to make a Lovecraft movie the way they might have made it when he wrote it in the 1920s? What if we did a black and white, silent Lovecraft movie?' *The Call of Cthulhu* was a story that nobody had ever attempted because nobody was sufficiently stupid or crazy. Many people regarded it as unfilmable, but we thought, with this way of approaching it, maybe we could solve some of the problems that made people feel that way."

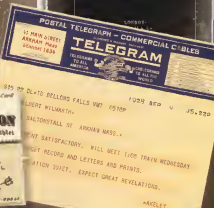
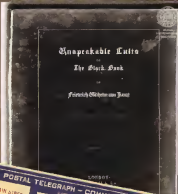
The result, in this case, looks like an old black and white film that has been restored. The actors even seem to be of the period. The cinematic inspirations are drawn from both German expressionism and American sources.

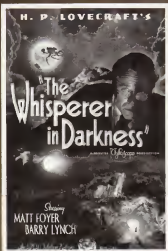
The architecture of the lost civilization borrows from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. But the stop-motion effects used to animate Cthulhu are very close to Willis O'Brien's work on *The Lost World*, contemporary with

Chaney's *The Phantom of the Opera*. The effects do not have the polish of the later *King Kong*, but feel closer to the twenties.

This film is a tribute to obsessive, compulsive fan dedication. Because it could have passed as a commercial film of the past it qualifies as an art film today.

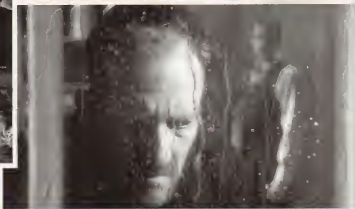
Everything about it is just right. The music by four people (!) is not of the period but evokes the past. The pacing is nothing like modern films. The use of light and shadow must have been easier to do in the good old days of black and white. They shot in digital color, and then performed the technical magic of what they call "Mythoscope" to turn their dreamscape into shades of yesterday.





Leman and Branney are nearing completion of their second feature-length film, which has already been accepted into a number of film festivals. "It's also done in black and white, but it's a talkie," says Leman. "We did *The Whisperer in Darkness*, which was written in 1931, so we're making it in the style of a 1930s horror movie; like Universal's *Dracula* or *Frankenstein*, it's a black and white, classic style, vintage talkie."

Martin Wately and Daniel Keenan in the background in *THE WHISPERER IN DARKNESS*.



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RE-ANIMATOR THE MUSICAL

Directed by **Stuart Gordon**

by **Madeleine Konster**

Tonight I am seeing *Re-Animator: The Musical* at the Steve Allen theater in Los Angeles for the second time, and I am completely giddy about it. As a long time fan of the film, two weeks ago I hesitantly bought tickets for the first night of previews. I was nervous because, as any hardcore horror fan can attest, sometimes an adaptation of a film you love doesn't do the original justice. And a musical? Musicals can be such soft, friendly things, and horror is a dark, gruesome creature. But I can assure you, all my fears were put to rest.

Director Stuart Gordon's 1985 cult classic, *Re-Animator*, is a creepy, campy, blood-splattered good time, and the musical adaptation is nothing less. The story, developed originally from an H.P. Lovecraft tale of the same title, lends itself quite well to the format. It begins with the introduction of Herbert West, a young, dapper, and completely mad scientist who is working on a special reagent with his mentor in Switzerland. A glowing, green reagent, with the power to resurrect the dead. A failed experiment causes West to flee back to the USA, where he enrolls in Miskatonic University, and moves in with another student named Dan. Dan is a passionate, good-looking medical student who happens to be dating the Dean's daughter. When he discovers West is working on what might be a cure for the most incurable affliction of all, death, he vows to help him. But, of course, everything goes horribly wrong.

Stuart Gordon reprises his role as director, and it almost seems like an obvious translation. The dialogue morphs into song, as tongue-in-cheek as ever, and the already over-the-top characters are perfect for the stage. The set is simple, consisting of one large door that convincingly serves as several homes, West's basement laboratory, the school, and most importantly, the morgue. A few key props come into use, including foam body parts, and a very

clever use of a cat puppet. Some of the more memorable moments of the film are worked into the show intelligently and impressively; a swinging lamp in the basement recreates the original lighting to a tee in one scene. Fans will be thrilled by the reworking of the special effects for the stage. Nothing is left out; there's still gore! Blood spills over the front rows of the audience, which is exactly where I was seated. Seated next to me was a woman who later confessed to me she had not seen the original movie, but she was as blood-soaked and excited by the show as I was.

The casting is spot on as well. Graham Skipper fills the shoes of Herbert West, bringing an intensity and hamminess to the role that does it justice. Fans of Gordon's recent work may recognize Chris L. McKenna from his 2003 film *King Of The Ants*, in the role of Dan. George Wendt (Norm from *Cheers*), is hilarious as Dean Halsey. My personal favorite was Jessie Merlin's performance as the lecherous Dr. Hill. Dripping with creepiness, he does a fabulous job acting with a certain physical impairment he receives in the second act.

I got a chance to briefly chat with Gordon after the show, who was extremely modest and gracious to his audience. Theater is a passion of his, which has been apparent from the direction his films have been going. Recent films of his have been more theatrical and character-driven, including *Edmond*, which was based on a David Mamet play. Even now that he's working in theater, Gordon's low-budget horror roots are still shining through.

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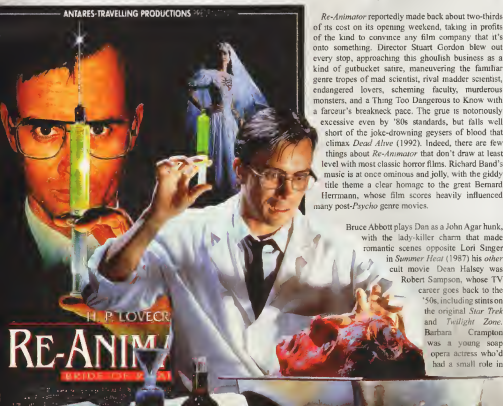
Lovecraft Re-animated

by Ron Garmon

Whatever anyone's objections regarding the allegedly "unfilmable" nature of H.P. Lovecraft's writings, by 1985 the horror movie had plainly used up every last alternative to them. The traditional gothic monsters were, by then, burnt-out, unfashionable, and victimized by far too many inept retellings. Even as the werewolf was enjoying a comeback romp in films like *Full Moon High*, *A Company of Wolves*, and *An American Werewolf in London*, this mini-revival was buried well before decade's end under the weight of derivative dogfood like *Howling III: The Marsupials*. Hammer, Amicus, and A.I.P. were long gone, taking with them not only the gothic horror movie but also its newly re-imagined late-20th century context. Even the ever-inventive European artisans of fringe were running out of ideas, as a 20-year stretch of stylish Italian and Spanish frightfix dissolved into designer incoherence far from the genre-changing best of Bava, Argento, and Jorge Grau. The foreseeable future looked like a massed wall of meat cleavers as Jason, Michael, and their numerous inferiors continued to own the dwindling number of screens devoted to this kind of movie.

Empire Pictures and *Re-Animator* changed all that, largely by returning to the good ol' genre verities, upping the humor, and doubling down on the gore. This oddball teens-vs.-adults variation on "Herbert West—Reanimator" relates the bootleg doings of medical students Dan Cain (stiff Bruce Abbott) and Herbert West (Jeffery Combs, all Peter Cushing-like fervor) at dreadfully oppressive Mistakonic U. Unabashedly driven and domineering, Herbert learned a few unorthodox tricks at his old alma mater in Switzerland, especially the application of a glowing, putrid-green reagent that, once injected into dead tissue, brings any corpse, carcass, or fragment thereof back to roaring, homicidal life. Unfortunately, the influential Dr. Hill (David Gale, his menacing bulk framed to suggest Christopher Lee) has an eye for Herbert's reagent and Dan's girlfriend Megan (lovely Barbara Crampton, in one of the more noted cheeseecake turns of the '80s), and few scraps are getting either.

ANTARES-TRAVELLING PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS



Re-Animator reportedly made back about two-thirds of its cost on its opening weekend, taking in profits of the kind to convince any film company that it's onto something. Director Stuart Gordon blew out every stop, approaching this ghoulish business as a kind of gutbucket satire, maneuvering the familiar genre tropes of mad scientist, rival madder scientist, endangered lovers, scheming faculty, murderous monsters, and a Thing Too Dangerous to Know with a farcical's breakneck pace. The grue is notoriously excessive even by '80s standards, but falls well short of the joke-drowning geysers of blood that climax *Dead Alive* (1992). Indeed, there are few things about *Re-Animator* that don't draw at least level with most classic horror films. Richard Band's music is at once ominous and jolly, with the giddy title theme a clear homage to the great Bernard Herrmann, whose film scores heavily influenced many post-*Psycho* genre movies.

Bruce Abbott plays Dan as a John Agar hunk, with the lady-killer charm that made romantic scenes opposite Lori Singer in *Summer Heat* (1987) his other cult movie. Dean Halsey was Robert Sampson, whose TV career goes back to the '50s, including stints on the original *Star Trek* and *Twilight Zone*. Barbara Crampton was a young soap opera actress who'd had a small role in



Brian DePalma's *Body Double* (1984). English-born David Gale was another soap veteran, likely best known to fright fans as one of the featured partiers in *Savage Weekend* (1979), a bizarre early slasher film with its own hardcore following among period enthusiasts. Probably the most truthful thing you can say about his imposing-demonic Dr. Hill is that he's every bit the counterweight Jeffery Combs needs to make his full-throttle performance as Herbert credible.

The diminutive, incisive Combs' short credit sheet featured bit parts in a couple of major movies (*Whose Life Is It Anyway?*; *The Man with Two Brains*), getting decapitated in a 1983 low-budget dead-teen flick called *Frightmare*, and a rather more prestigious turn as Henry Antrabus in a distinguished TV production of Thomson Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth* the same year. An actor with something like Vincent Price's adroit comic sense combined with the snakelike concentration of Anthony Perkins, Combs invests Herbert with a fierce will that recalls Peter Cushing's supremely ruthless Baron Frankenstein, committing all manner of grisly mayhem just to shoot his day-glo reagent into the results. The finale, with a morgueful of crazed zombies and several slaughtered principals, would seem to rule out a sequel, but that's just a matter of plot mechanics.

By the time *Bride of Re-Animator* hit theaters in 1990, Gordon had already lensed one other Lovecraft-inspired feature. From

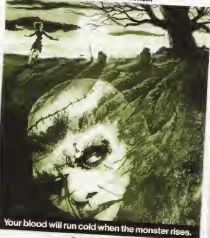


Peter Cushing in FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL

Beyond (1986) featured Combs, Crampton, and big Ken Foree from Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* in a well-remembered whack at the story of the same name. *Bride* reunited Combs and Abbott, pitting them and Dan's new girl (Fabiana Udeno, indelibly known for Alotta Fagina in *Austin Powers*, *International Man of Mystery*) against the revived, flying head of Dr. Hill (Gale, who'd carved the beginnings of an enviable career as a TV and movie villain in the interim and appeared in five more features before his 1991 death), his army of zombies, and a restitched and vengeful Megan (Mary Sheldon). Despite a wilder plot, looper effects, and another round of brilliantly deadpan performances,

Bride isn't quite the model of mansprang tension the

His brain came from a genius. His body came from a killer.
His soul came from hell!



Frankenstein
AND THE
MONSTER FROM HELL

starring Peter Cushing Shane Briant
screenplay by John Elder
Produced by Roy Scoggin
Directed by Terence Fisher
Music by Moray Forsyth
© 1986 by Metropolitan Pictures

original is, but that's made up for by dialing the crazy humor up to 11. Combs' readings of toss-off lines like "Make a note of it, Dan! Tissue rejection!" are enough to bring down the house, and the mere presence of blustery Mel Stewart as a luckless pathologist also nudges the film toward comedy. This was *Re-Animator* producer Brian Yuzna's second outing as director and it certainly measures up to his flashy 1989 debut, *Society*, in terms of pace and bright, dislocated weirdness.

The role of Herbert West made Combs a durable '80s icon and kicked off a career in horror films that continues to the present. Needless to say, he still shares in the general Lovecraft movie renaissance that's gone on since *Re-Animator*. Early vehicles *Necronomicon: Book of the Dead* (1993) and 1994's *Lurking Fear* are generally considered lesser efforts, though Combs appears as Lovecraft himself in the former. *Castle Freak* (1995), a rough version of "The Outsider," reunited Combs with Barbara Crampton and director Stuart Gordon. To date, the last entry in the original franchise remains *Beyond Re-Animator*, which premiered on the Sci-Fi Channel in 2003 while an unedited version received a short theatrical run. Helmed by Yuzna, this one is less reminiscent of Lovecraft and more of Hammer's *Frankenstein* and the *Monster from Hell*, as Herbert continues his experiments inside a maximum-security prison. As a further inquiry into just how much blood-drenched havoc an aging boy scientist and his ever-mutating theories can spread, this one had a few intriguing new ideas—such as West's dabbings in nano-energy as a kind of soul-transference—to match the star's inimitable swagger, but didn't satisfy very many fans.

Far more intriguing is the idea for a third sequel that was kicked around for much of the last decade but never came anywhere near a film camera. *House of Re-Animator* would have seen Herbert called to the White House to revivify an essential-but-dead Vice President in a political milieu as demented as Yuzna and Gordon could make it. Alas, the last decade proved a curiously lean one for political satire in film, so this remained in that

suspectively Lovecraftian-monitored
vale. Forry Ackerman w a s
wont to term the "Real m
of Unwrought Things..."

Cthulhu Comes to South Park

by Jenna Burnett

South Park took on a classic big bad this season in a three-episode story arc following the crime fighting gang known as Coon and Friends. Satirizing the tragic mistake made by the BP oil company in the Gulf of Mexico, Trey Parker and Matt Stone's comedic animated series evoked a much older evil in order to poke fun at the organization's missteps.

With oil leaking from their offshore rigs, BP drills into the moon, releasing the great monster, Cthulhu, of Lovecraft lore. It's up to a rag-tag group of pre-teen crime fighters to save the day – if they don't kill each other first. Angered by his dismissal from Coon and Friends, foul-mouthed bad boy Cartman (aka the Coon) enlists the aid of Cthulhu to annihilate the rest of his team. In a *My Neighbor Totoro*-inspired ballad, the Coon plays on Cthulhu's unknown softer side to befriend the hell beast and convince him to do his bidding.

The remainder of the Coon and Friends entourage, now led by Mysterion, band together to defeat the mighty Cthulhu. Catching wind of a mysterious meeting of a group known as the Cult of Cthulhu, the boys find Kenny's parents among the cultists waiting to herald in the dark lord. Banded together with the local-Goths, who believe the rise of Cthulhu will bring forth an event akin to an unending Nine Inch Nails concert (not to mention the fall of the Disney channel), the town's cult members attempt to keep the boys from fighting the beast by killing Mysterion.

Mysterion, we come to find, is actually Kenny, who reveals that his superpower is the inability to die. Better yet, no one can remember his frequent deaths, thus creating some dissonance within the group about whether his powers are real. The gang is also quick to point out that group member Bradley Biggle, also known as superhero Mint Berry Crunch, has no real use besides "the power of mint and berry set with a satisfying tasty crunch." In their argument, the identity of each superhero is revealed just as Cartman arrives to lure the boys to their deaths.

The boys fall into the Coon's trap and are transported by Cthulhu into the dark Lovecraftian oblivion known as R'lyeh. Kenny escapes the outer realm by committing suicide and waking up in his bed at home. Acknowledging that Kenny's power may be the only way to defeat Cthulhu, Mysterion and Mint Berry Crunch track down the elder god through a news break announcing that Cthulhu has killed pop icon Justin Bieber. Cthulhu, still under the influence of the kitten-like Coon, attacks the boys, only to be defeated by Mint Berry Crunch, who is revealed to be from another planet in a Superman-esque plot line. Mint Berry Crunch uses his superpowers to subdue Cthulhu and take him back to his home dimension, thus fixing the hole caused by the now-named "DP" oil company. In the final scene, Kenny's parents reveal that Mysterion's powers may have been a result of the meetings they attended as members of the Cult of Cthulhu.

It is often said that a subject hasn't been legitimized until it's been given the *South Park* treatment. While it may have taken almost 85 years, Lovecraft can rest soundly in whatever dimension beyond reality he has chosen to occupy knowing that his work has been immortalized in the highest form of contemporary memorialization.



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GAME OF THRONES

BY ED BLAIR

While J.R.R. Tolkien will always be held up as the father of the fantasy genre, his *Lord of the Rings* casting a long shadow over the rest of the literary world, George R.R. Martin's *Song of Ice and Fire* series—now four books deep—has emerged from that shadow as one of the most original and engrossing pieces of fantasy ever written. With *Ice and Fire*'s first entry, *Game of Thrones*, Martin provided an opening into a world where magic and dragons are placed on the far periphery of the story, barely visible amidst a deeply cynical populace more concerned with scratching out their own existences amidst massive political and social unrest.

Thrones introduces us to the land of Westeros, an island nation ruled from its central capitol of King's Landing. Life in Westeros has more in common with medieval Europe than with Tolkien's Middle Earth or Robert Jordan's *Andor*. Stories of sorcerers and fantastical creatures have become all but myth, handed down from generation to generation, treated less like history and more like bedtime stories. But the appearance of a red comet-like object in the sky is interpreted by some as a harbinger of great calamity. The sense of dread is increased when the King of Westeros dies under mysterious circumstances, throwing the entire kingdom into chaos as no less than seven different parties, each with their own armies, lay claim as the rightful heir to the crown. The entire world erupts in all-out war as a complex game of alliances and betrayals ensues.

All of this chaos is underscored by the news

of strange occurrences from throughout the land. In the north, a wall 700 feet high and 300 miles wide stretches across the entire country, guarding against what was once thought an untamed and barbarous land. For generations all has been quiet. But recently there are rumors that a former servant of the Kingdom is amassing an army to bring down the wall and invade the south. Even more disturbing are stories that The Others, the dead brought back to life in all their Romero-esque glory, have reappeared after thousands of years and are threatening the existence of civilization itself.

While the series will inevitably draw comparisons to Tolkien, Martin—who cites Tolkien's work as amongst the most influential on his own stories—is quick to dispel the notion that he's simply doing

another re-working of *Lord of the Rings*. "The concept of the Dark Lord and the good guy versus bad guy, while brilliantly handled in Tolkien, in the hands of many Tolkien successors, has become sort of a cartoon," he begins. "We don't need any more Dark Lords. We don't need any more of this, 'Here's the good guys; they're in white. Here's the bad guys, they're in black—and also they're really ugly.' The battle of good and evil is fundamental to much of fiction and is a genuine and legitimate topic as the core of fantasy. But I think the battle between good and evil is waged within the individual human heart. We all have good in us and we all have evil in us. We may do a wonderful, good act on Tuesday and do a horrible, selfish, bad act on Wednesday. To me, that's the juice. That's the great human drama of fiction."

Sean Bean and Maisie Williams as Ned and Arya Stark





The series strays from much of fantasy by being far more mature than other entries in the genre. Characters speak with a unique dialogue that is a

hybrid of old English and modern-day speech that can be quite strong at times. The distinct line between good and evil is completely erased as a character can act in the noblest of fashions one minute, only to indulge their basest and most primal wants the next. Martin doesn't shy away from the sensuality and violence that is inherent to the human condition. Even children and teenagers, who occupy many of the primary roles in the story, are not spared the atrocities and brutalities of a world in chaos. He cites history as his primary influence in this regard. "The children were always at the heart of this. My inspirations are drawn not just from Tolkien, but from a lot of history and historical fiction. I tried to blend some of the tropes and traditions of historical fiction with fantasy while I did this. I'm always reading histories and historical novels. God, it was a brutal time. Children weren't sentimentalized as they are today. They were often made to work from a very young age. They were taken into battle. Boys became pages and squires, riding into battle with your knight. You're twelve years old and people are hacking at you with swords and shooting at you with arrows and stuff like that. You're not at home being protected. It was a different

age with a different mindset; and I wanted to reflect some of that." Bringing a series as well-loved and complex as *Ice and Fire* to TV is no simple chore. Tasked with such a Herculean feat were two men, both accomplished authors in their own right. David Benioff, author of *The 25th Hour* and *City of Thieves*, and screenwriter of *Troy* and *Brothers*, received the book from Martin's literary agent to be considered for a feature film adaptation

way to do the story properly, was to make it as a television show on a network that would permit *Thrones'* sense of violence, sensuality, and complex maturity of story.

The approach the screenwriting/producing duo took to creating the scripts was to stick as closely to the books as possible without pulling any punches. "George's world is a violent world." While the show contains a lot of intense violence, Benioff insists it's not done in a celebratory

fashion. "We wanted to keep it away from a gorefest sensibility because there's a certain line you cross that detracts from the impact. We want the violence to be hard to watch; the way violence in the real world is hard to watch, it's not supposed to be for the thrill aspect of it." HBO's standout show *Deadwood* is an example cited by both producers as a perfect example of how they wanted the violence to play out in a way that reflected the nature of the world and the characters, and helped to expand the story rather than solely focus on the violence. "You don't want to watch it, but you have to," Weiss concludes.



more than five years ago. "The first thing I thought was that I'm in love with this," Benioff explains. "The second thing I thought was that they'd never work as movies. They're too long, too many characters, too complex." He immediately sent a copy of the book to friend and fellow author D.B. Weiss (*Lucky Wander Boy*) who, much to Benioff's chagrin, read the book in two days, "He's a faster reader than me," Benioff jokes. Weiss adds, "I haven't done that since I was twelve." Weiss's reaction was equally as enthusiastic, leading the pair to approach HBO, believing that the only

way to do the story properly, was to make it as a television show on a network that would permit *Thrones'* sense of violence, sensuality, and complex maturity of story.





Emilia Clarke as Daenerys, doing one of her many Lady Godiva impressions.

One of the more interesting choices made for the production was to move the entire shoot overseas. Benioff and Weiss had met at Trinity College in Ireland and, drawing from their experiences there, felt that it would be an ideal setting, being able to travel from rolling plains to the ocean and up to the mountains in the matter of a few hours. They ultimately shot the majority of the show in Northern Ireland, with an additional six weeks in Malta and a short stint in Scotland. The wide variety of geography available to them is apparent in the opening episodes as we move between a snow-covered wilderness, a kingdom set against bleak plains, a beautiful oceanside castle, a seaside villa reminiscent of the Mediterranean, and the foothills of a vast mountain range—all in the first episode.

It takes more than pretty locations to make a convincing fantasy, though. Too many times we've seen fantasy shot in a way where it appears to be people in costumes running around in the woods. Enter veteran cinematographer Alik Sakharov. While the bulk of his work was

done for HBO on *The Sopranos*, it was his duties on *Rome* that won him his Emmy. It was clear that Alik would be an excellent choice as he proved that he could capture landscapes and create an atmosphere in a way that transported audiences. Despite working on a TV budget, *Rome* never had the feeling of TV. One of the hallmarks of a truly great cinematographer is making the small feel big. And with the locations he was provided for *Thrones* he makes the most of each frame. The use of the topography is nothing short of stunning, on par with some of the best epic filmmaking in the vein of *Braveheart*. Each location feels unique and foreign, never seeming to be a set or somewhere just a short trip from a city. When combined with the digital elements, the wide shots of the castles and fortresses transport the viewer to Westeros, instead of tightly framed shots that seem like apologies for a lack of creativity, skill, or budget. The style of filming is wholly unashamed, never afraid to pull back and create a grandiose sense of scale. *Thrones* is not only one of the best-looking TV shows to ever be lensed, but is on-par with some of its much larger-budgeted, big screen counterparts.

The opening scene of the series recounts the first book's prologue almost verbatim. A group of rangers tasked with guarding The Wall are sent out on a mission to find some Wildings (uncivilized nomads who populate the Land Beyond the Wall) who have been causing problems. The rangers enter a gorgeously shot, snow-covered forest only to find that the bodies have been dismembered and lain out in a pattern. The carnage is put out there to be fully seen for what it is, no tricky camera angles. As the rangers investigate further they come face-to-face with The Others, the zombie-like creatures that hunt men. Again, there is no "shy" coverage of the scene, no shots to keep the creatures in the shadows or to imply they're scarier than the budget could afford. The Others are put onto the screen, full frame, in all their ghastly glory (excellent character design) to do their worst to the human intruders. This full-view style of production has been a hallmark of HBO since it began airing original programming, and gives great promise to *Thrones*.

The largest challenge facing the production, however, would be casting

Putting actors into the shoes of such well-known and specifically-defined characters is always challenging, even more so when many of them are between the ages of six and sixteen. Benioff concedes that they came into casting with very open minds. "There were only two people that were on our wish list. When I started reading the book I pictured Sean Bean as Ned Stark. Luckily, Dan felt the same way and George felt the same way. And then, Peter Dinklage to play Tyrion always seemed like the no-brainer for us."

Bean's role is as much of a central figure as an ensemble-heavy show like *Thrones* is likely to get. His character is nothing like the morally conflicted Boromir—his character from *Lord of the Rings*. As the patriarch of the Stark family, Lord of Winterfell, charged with guarding the northernmost part of the Kingdom, he is a simple, moral, family man who wants nothing more than to live out the rest of his life in peace and quiet. Those plans go up in smoke as he's thrust into the middle of the chaos, leaving his family behind to assist his King and best friend, portrayed in all his gluttonous and scene-stealing glory by Mark Addy. Bean's portrayal is strong, stoic, infused with a quiet brutality and strong sense of right and wrong. In one of the opening scenes of the series, he explains to his young son why he must carry out the execution of a deserter.





Lena Headey as the oft-conspiring Cersei Lannister

himself. "The man who passes the sentence should swing the sword."

More inspired casting comes in the form of the always brilliant Lena Headey (*300*) and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (*Black Hawk Down*) as, respectively, Queen Cersei Lannister and her brother Sir Jaime Lannister. The pair are absolutely magnetic as the plotting, scheming, incestuous couple that will do anything to protect one another. Their depravity knows no limits and is established almost immediately as they close episode one. But much of the weight is carried by newcomers who were, as Weiss puts it, "plucked straight from drama school," with little or no credits to their name.

Of the many new actors on display in the series, Kit Harington, Sophie Turner, and Maisie Williams are all fantastic as children of the Stark family. Each of their story arcs takes them on journeys that include incredible hardships and immense suffering. "Everything they did was legal," jokes Weiss, "but it remains to be seen if they'll actually be allowed to watch the finished show."

None of the new actors shine so bright as Emilia Clarke, portraying the exiled, teenage queen being hunted by assassins, Daenerys Targaryen. Not only does the role isolate her from much of the cast, but she is forced to carry one of the largest story lines of any character in the series, suffering an inordinate amount of physical and emotional trauma as she attempts to help her abusive brother secure an army by agreeing to an arranged marriage with a barbarian warlord, Khal Drogo (*Stargate: Atlantis* actor Jason Momoa) who treats her like a possession and refuses to speak her language. Emilia brings a poise and dignity to the role usually seen in an actor far more seasoned than a girl with just one IMDb credit on her resumé.

While the producers put together a brilliant ensemble, there is one who stands out from them all. Peter Dinklage's (*The Station Agent*) Tyrion Lannister, the limp whose mind is his most lethal weapon, steals absolutely every scene he's in. Whether he's waking up drunk in the dog kennel, frolicking in bed with a lady of the night, or teaching his nephew, the prince, a few manners by slapping him silly, Dinklage is absolutely in command of his character. No character is more self-serving, more scheming, less predictable, and more of a pure joy to watch than Tyrion Lannister. He is a character reminiscent of another HBO classic, *Deadwood*'s Al Swearengen. In Dinklage, HBO looks to repeat what it did with Ian McShane, creating a veritable awards magnet. Both characters, as awful as the may be, are impossible not to root for.

The first season consists of ten episodes, which will encompass the entire first book. Presently, the series is four books into what Martin says will likely be a seven-book series. "Seven books is what I'm aiming for... but I've been wrong before. When I first started this it was supposed to be a trilogy." He's promised that book five, *Dance with Dragons*—which has been in the works for five

years—will be out "soon". That leads us to the inevitable question: What happens if the show catches up to *Iron*? "I hope we never get to that point. But I've got a head start on them. If we get to the second season that'll be *Clash of Kings*. The next book is *Storm of Swords*, which is a monster. So they're going to have to divide it into two seasons, I would think. That's three more seasons right there. Then there's *Feast for Crows* and *Dance with Dragons* that take place simultaneously, separated geographically rather than chronologically, which will have to be combined. Once they're combined you've got a monster that's even longer than *Storm of Swords*. So you're talking about another two, maybe three seasons. By that time I should be finished with the sixth book and maybe even the seventh book, hopefully."

In the end, Martin was very happy after seeing the initial twenty-minute demo reel at the HBO offices in Santa Monica this past January. As the lights came up we all turned to see his response. "Pretty cool!" he beamed like a proud father. And for a quiet man like George R.R. Martin, those two words

to know that we were all witnessing something special. 



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

JIM BUTCHER

TURN COAT

A NOVEL OF THE DRESDEN FILES

Death and the High Cost of Wizardry:

Investigating a murder is all in a day's work for The Dresden Files' eponymous antihero— even if it's his own...

By Joe Nazzaro

If you're a loyal fan of Jim Butcher's best-selling Dresden Files novels, the next sentence won't come as much of a surprise; if, however, the twelfth installment in the series, *Changes*, is still in your "to read" pile, you might want to skip down a bit.

It's a gutsy move to kill off your main character, but that's exactly what Butcher did with his hero, wise-cracking sorcerer/detective Harry Dresden, at the end of *Changes*. As cliffhangers go, it was a damn big one, but this is a supernatural universe after all, where demons and vampires coexist alongside hard-bitten Chicago cops and mobsters, so in this case it's safe to assume that all is not lost. "If we were doing a TV show," says Butcher, "this would be the mid-season break episode where you want to make sure you get people back when the new episodes come back after Christmas."

For *Famous Monsters* readers unfamiliar with the books, *The Dresden Files* is Butcher's *New York Times* best-selling series about Harry Dresden, a Chicago private eye and wizard, whose cases often involve vampires, demons, werewolves, and other supernatural creatures. A consultant for the Chicago Police Department's Special Investigations Unit, he often teams up with Karen Murphy, one of the few cops aware of the magical activity taking place in the city. The cast of characters also includes Harry's half-brother Thomas, a vampire of the White Court; Molly Carpenter, Harry's young but powerful apprentice wizard; Johnny Marcone, the local Mob boss and frequent nemesis; members of the White Council of Wizards; and Mouse, Harry's oversized dog, a "cross between a woolly mammoth and West Highland Dogosaurus."

The next book, which goes on sale April 5th, is titled *Ghost Story*, which should provide some hint as to what readers

should expect. "Dresden has to solve his own murder," Butcher explains, "which is totally not fair, but completely in keeping with the series. We've had ghosts in *The Dresden Files* before, but the camera hasn't really been on the ghost side of things, so that will be fun and interesting and I really had a good time writing that."

If Dresden does return for future installments of the series — and there is a reasonably good chance that he will (wink, wink) — it will no doubt be in quite different circumstances. He's going to find a lot of unfinished business waiting for him, including his commitments as Winter Knight of the Faerie, a bargain he was forced to make with his godmother, Queen Mab. According to Butcher, we won't have to wait long to see what happens with that deal. "We've still got to sort out some other things first, but the stories I write have never been about trying to skate out of the consequences of your actions. They've mostly been about how those things come back to get you and Harry made a deal with Mab. Just because he took a bullet and saw a light at the end of the tunnel doesn't mean he's getting out of the deal, and we'll see how that goes in the future."

The concept for *The Dresden Files* began taking shape when Butcher decided he wanted to write his own supernatural fiction that would capture some of the magic, no pun intended, in much of the genre work he loved himself. "It was obvious, for example, that when *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was on, it was a serious inspiration, and so were the Anita Blake books by Laurell Hamilton, at least early

books in that series. That was one of the things that made me think, 'If I can't have the series I want to read, maybe I should try to write something like that!'"

Butcher had already put together a series of supernatural-based short stories, but when it came time to write a full-length novel, he needed a hero who could confront these elements on a regular basis. "I was watching something on The History Channel about the history of magic and wizards and came to the conclusion that there was a lot of similarity between the wizard character and the detective character. If you look at early images of Gandalf in particular and compare them to Sherlock Holmes, there is such a strong similarity between the characters; they're both tall,





Paul Blackthorne, Valerie Cruz, Terrence Mann, and Conrad Coates star in the too short-lived Sci Fi (now SyFY) Channel original adaptation of **THE DRESDEN FILES**

stork-like, irascible, hyper-intelligent people, who ferret out things that nobody else can figure out. I had already wanted to write something in the supernatural world so all of those things, plus *Scooby Doo* and the setting from *Cast a Deadly Spell* all came together and I said, 'I've got to have a wizard detective!' That's when I started putting this project together."

Butcher's first *Dresden Files* novel was written as a class project to prove his instructor wrong. "She had been trying to tell me how to write genre fiction novels for a long time," he elaborates, "and I had an English Lit degree, so I thought, 'I'll show her!' I liked much of what Debbie Chester had to say, because she had more than 40 novels to her own credit, so she knew what she was talking about. But I disagreed with her on some particulars, so I set out to write the first book of *The Dresden Files* to prove how wrong she was."

Case in point: the character of Bob, a disembodied spirit who resides in a skull in Harry's workshop and provides a wealth of supernatural knowledge, originally began

life as an inside joke between Butcher and his instructor. "When I was talking to her about developing this series, I said, 'I'm thinking about giving Harry this lab assistant type of character, who knows a lot about magic. That way, he and Harry can talk to each other and I'll be able to convey information about magic and the way it works to the reader.'"

"She said, 'That's a great idea, just as long as you don't make him a talking head character!' I asked what that was, and she said, 'That's a character who just comes on and has no purpose except to talk about something. He's that character that comes on and says, "As you know, Bob, the nangtail salmon always migrates this way..."'

"That was the example she gave me, so just to tweak her tail, I created a literal talking head character named Bob, whose job was to help me with the exposition. I decided, 'Well, if I'm going to have a lot of exposition on the way magic works, I'm going to have to give it to the reader with a spoonful of sugar, so I'll make him mouthy

and he'll have this sex obsession so we can get the wise-ass pervert talking skull character who is also the font of wisdom and knowledge.' It sounds ridiculous, but works for what I wanted to do and the readers have liked him a lot."

With the first book, *Storm Front*, finished, Butcher began working on the second and third novels right away. "I actually had the third book finished before I sold the first one," he says. "Debbie read the first couple of chapters of the first book and said, 'This is going to sell!' ... So I got serious about it, and wrote the first and second one and after finishing the third one said, 'Okay, three is enough, we'll see if I can sell them.'"

Easier said than done. Butcher may have felt he'd come up with a winning concept, but it took the better part of two years to find a publisher that agreed with him. "I've got about 200 rejection letters now," he admits, "not just for *The Dresden Files* but for other stuff I sent out as well. Most of them are form rejection letters but I had them all in this great big red folder that I called the Rose File."

Excitingly, that film hasn't had many additions in recent years. *Storm Front* was released by ROC/Penguin in 2000, followed by *Fool Moon* and *Grave Peril* a year later, new books have followed annually ever since. The series became so popular that the Sci-Fi Channel bought the rights for a television version, which aired in 2007 with Paul Blackthorne in the lead role. It was less than successful, with just a dozen episodes airing before the network pulled the plug. "I think the attitude I more or less walked away with," reflects Butcher, "was that it could have been a lot worse. There were a lot of changes that were inflicted, some of which I completely understood and even liked after a while and some I never did get to like."

"The show itself was beleaguered by a lot of problems that didn't have anything to do with audience and a lot to do with the business end of things. But overall, it could have been a lot worse than it was. It introduced a bunch of people to the books and I got to be in an episode of the show and get my Stan Lee appearance in the background, which was a lot of fun. So overall I think it was a very positive experience. I think lots worse things could



have happened, look at poor Dean Koontz and how they've treated some of his stuff!"

The TV series also established the fact that *The Dresden Files* could work in any number of media, including a series of graphic novels originally published by Dabel Brothers and a role-playing game by Evil Hat Productions. "What I see in my head when I'm writing it," claims Butcher, "is either an animated series or a series of

comic book frames. Those are the images I try and describe as I'm going along, so writing a comic book was kind of natural. But you know what I would like to see more than anything else? A *Dresden Files* multi-player online game. That would be a cool game. I would totally get into that but I would never get another book written. That would be the danger, so maybe it's a good thing it hasn't happened yet."

While readers are eagerly awaiting the release of *Ghost Story*, Butcher has provided the anthology *Side Jobs*, which collects virtually every *Dresden Files* story published to date and includes an original novella called *Aftermath*. "I wanted to get all of my short stories in one collection so the fans could have them in one spot and then I realized the way print schedules work out, there were two stories that were going to be missing. I'm now looking for other places to do short stories so I can have enough for a second collection."

In addition to his ongoing work on *The Dresden Files*, Butcher has made several other forays into the fantasy genre lately. He recently wrapped up his *Codex Alera* series after six books and is now getting ready to collaborate with friend and fellow

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JIM BUTCHER

"Jim Butcher the Hapless Hero Writing Policy: Hapless Hero" - Entertainment Weekly



to hell yet and it's the last city on Earth and that's where we start our story. It will be an interesting challenge, because I've never worked with another writer before, but Cam is such a good-natured guy and extremely intelligent, very good with creating a world around events that happen. We decided to split things up 50-50, and we're going to have two main protagonists who don't like each other much but have to work together. Cam is going to take one of them, I'll take the other and we'll go from there."

Returning his attention to *The Dresden Files*, Butcher confirms that he does have an ending in mind for the series, but with any luck, it's still some years off. "If I get to write the whole thing the way I originally had it planned, it will be 20-ish books and then a great big apocalyptic trilogy to finish it off. So I've got a certain number of books in mind, and some big story events that I want to unfold."

With so much going on at the moment, Jim Butcher couldn't be happier. "I've got a good story that people seem to like and a great bunch of fans that are constantly in touch. I've got a great editor to work with, who very gently points out the parts you need to improve and then stands back and

lets you fix it.

"My wife Shannon is getting a paranormal romance series rolling now, and one of these days, she's going to be bigger than I am. People will say, 'Who's that over there? Oh, that's Shannon Butcher's husband; I think he writes some sort of fantasy thing!' So I don't see how I could possibly complain and not invite the wrath of the gods."



novelist Cam Banks on a new fantasy series. "It's probably going to be two or three books long, and more sword and sorcery. Actually, it's post-apocalyptic fantasy, sort of like if Frodo said, 'You must take the ring, Gandalf!' and Gandalf had said, 'Okay,' and the world had fallen into darkness, which is basically what happened to this place.

"But there's one [place] that hasn't gone

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Hi, The Issue #254 on the Beleg Human article was very cool (just got it at the comic store!!I'm a fae, cae I got a bigger pic of the crowtchieg werewolf, to the left of page 14.....(You tensed us by showing only 1/2 the werewolf!!), if I understand correctly, that pic was used whee they showed the werewolf prop off at the IMATs (londoe trade shew...) and a bigger pic of the same werewolf on the bottom of page 15....

Thanks, a feni
gory



Mystery Photo #255



The subject of this month's Mystery Photo shares a commonality with Rumplestiltskin or, for our Harry Potter fans, Lord Voldemort. But don't let the looks deceive you, our monster is simply a misunderstood child in possession of some serious mommy and daddy issues, like emotional abuse and abandonment. If you were denied such a simple and fundamental thing as was denied to our poor, poor creature, you too might spend your evenings terrorizing curious college co-eds. Send your answers to fangmail@famousmonsters.com with "Mystery Photo" in the subject line and you might just win some excellent FM goodies.



FM#254's Mystery Photo The Guyver (1991)

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FAMOUS LAST WORDS

As we thaw out from another chill winter, we wonder what ancient beasts—like those of Lovecraftian lore—will be set free upon the world. As we continue our spring cleansing we've uncovered treasures once thought lost for all of time. The classic content in FM is about to come alive in a way reminiscent of the Modern Prometheus, insisting on making its presence known upon the earth. The winds of change are blowing. One need look no further for proof that the Age of Monsters is upon us than the honoring of the real life Dr. Frankenstein, the man who makes monsters walk, Rick Baker, with an Academy Award for his work in resurrecting the Wolf. Our sincerest congratulations to him and Dave Elsey on their win. Now, we must be back to our work preparing our next issue to commemorate a time when giant monsters roamed the earth and to bring a voice from beyond the grave back to the pages of Famous Monsters (all done without the use of a Ouija board). We look forward to seeing you all then.

THE MAN BEHIND THE MASKS



VERNE LANGDON

1941-2011

For those of us who grew up reading the original *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, Verne Langdon was someone who was very special. Each month we'd race to open our new issue to not only see what gruesome goodies Uncle Forry had for us that month, but also to see what creature-esque creations Don Post Studios had in store for us. Despite only spending 6 years with the company, Verne was one of the driving forces behind the exploding latex Halloween mask industry. His *Calendar Masks*, along with the way he promoted them in *FM*, made both he and the masks as much a part of our history as the great Universal monsters themselves.

Verne's influence cannot be understated. Generations of monster makers and effects makeup artists credit those Don Post masks and the work that Verne did in inspiring them to find their calling in Hollywood bringing their monstrous makings to all screens, big and small. Verne was always very kind to Forry and FM, and it is with only the greatest affection that we offer our final goodbye to a man who will always be remembered for allowing us to become the monsters we always knew we could be.

NEXT ISSUE:

COLOSSAL KAIJU CAGEMATCH,
Shockwave's debut in TF3...we
will miss you midgety thumbs, a
journey back to the silent era and
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